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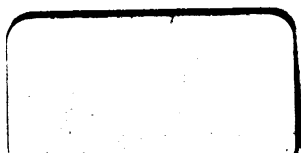
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COSMOPOLITAN RECOLLECTIONS.

COSMOPOLITAN RECOLLECTIONS.

BY
THE AUTHOR OF
"RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS OF COURTS & SOCIETY."
Mme. M. S. van de Velde

IN TWO VOLUMES.

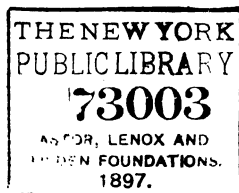
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L. S. T.



CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS
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INTRODUCTION.

THE writer of these pages cannot pretend to claim for them more consideration than an ordinary spectator who watches the varying procession of contemporary events, until it becomes shrouded in the haze of indifference or lost in the shadows of forgetfulness. Gazing from afar on the motley *cortège*, he becomes confused and unable to distinguish the actors as they pass, unheeding as fate, unreal as phantoms; but while he strains his eager eyes, out of the dim background of inchoate masses, every now and then a form takes body and shape, asserting itself for an instant distinct and clear, and impressing its presence indelibly on the imagination of the looker-on. Those illuminated silhouettes are not all of the same order; they come at times in radiant groups, at others alone, or spaced at long intervals, clad in purple or veiled in crape, men with rugged features, women with gentle faces, the

old and the young, some holding in their hands the thunders of war, some the palms of peace, wearing on their brows the laurels of victory or the stars of the poet; great ones of the earth or Sisters of Mercy, thinkers and workers, the proud and the lowly, the triumphant and the oppressed, but all with the common ineffaceable stamp of having put their mark on the great drama of life and left their "footprints on the sands of Time."

To chronicle the memories awakened by these fleeting apparitions, without invading the territory of the historian, the censor, or the critic, has been the aim of these volumes. Honestly expressed individual impressions and frank personal judgment, may lay themselves open to controversy and contradiction—for there never were and never will be two points of view exactly similar, the slightest change in the focus altering the likeness—but they must be exonerated from the charge of sycophantic flattery or ill-natured prejudice.

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	V

CHAPTER I.

The Influence of Women in Europe—Three German Empresses: Augusta, Victoria, Augusta Victoria —Countess Waldersee	1
--	---

CHAPTER II.

Queen of Roumania, Carmen Sylva—Queen Nathalie of Servia	38
---	----

CHAPTER III.

Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria—Princess Clementine of Saxe-Coburg—Prince Alexander of Battenberg— The Battenbergs—Grand Duke of Hesse—Madame de Kolemne—Ary Ecilaw—Prince Nicholas of Montenegro	63
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

Czar and Czarina—The Czarevitch—Gatchina—The Cossacks—The Ural—Prince of Mingrelia	104
---	-----

CHAPTER V.

General Komaroff—M. de Giers—Prince Gortchakof—	PAGE
Prince Bismarck—M. de Rottenburg—Friedrichs-	
ruhe	146

CHAPTER VI.

Count Herbert von Bismarck—Count “Bill” von	
Bismarck—M. de Bleichröder—Dr. Schweningen-	
—Marshal von Moltke	188

CHAPTER VII.

The Prince of Naples—The King and Queen of	
Italy—Archduke Rudolph of Austria—His death	
—Emperor Francis Joseph	224

COSMOPOLITAN RECOLLECTIONS

CHAPTER I.

The Influence of Women in Europe—Three German
Empresses: Augusta, Victoria, Augusta Victoria—
Countess Waldersee.

A CHARACTERISTIC feature of the present time is one which, in the regular, monotonous rotation of events, has at periodical intervals been dominant—the preponderance of women in the world. They have once more overstepped the boundaries of the realms of beauty, grace, and elegance, which are their imprescriptible birthright, to enter the lists with their lords; not content to gather laurels in the gardens of Art and Literature, they have conquered them in the barren fields of Science, Law, and Medicine, and to render their power more complete, the accidents of heredity, birth,

and death have conspired to place their small white hands on the helm of public affairs. They have asserted themselves as politicians; seated on the greatest thrones of Europe, they have filled a part as important and more influential than the rulers of the sterner sex in whom sovereignty was vested. The Royal ladies of to-day may not impossibly rank in history and in the judgment of posterity with the Catherines of Medici, the Elizabeths of England, the Catherines of Russia, and the Christines of Sweden, while their record will remain unstained by the darker deeds which marred the fame of their illustrious predecessors.

Gambetta, the fiery Tribune, once said, despondingly: "The Republic is wanting in women." He made this want the apology for a lack of prestige and brilliancy which he instinctively felt and was powerless to remedy. He died with the void still unfilled, and to this day modern France, under her new rule, has no luminous female figure towards which she can turn as to a guardian spirit; no graceful or poetical incarnation to lift her above the vulgar dissensions of party intrigues; no saint and

no martyr ; no Joan of Arc, Marie Antoinette, or Charlotte Corday ; not even a Théroigne de Mericourt to breathe into her sons the spirit of fervent devotion, ardent loyalty, or reckless enthusiasm.

In Germany alone three Empresses have successively, and yet contemporaneously, attracted the eyes of the world, each possessing a marked individuality, and claiming to fulfil a mission. In Spain, the turbulent reign of Isabella, the unsuccessful venture of a King chosen from a foreign house—things of the past—have been followed by the tender, feminine, vicarious rule of Christine—widow, mother, and Regent. The Peninsula, silencing her fierce jealousies and bitter animosities, relents before the young Princess who, cheerfully renouncing the pleasures of her age, the smiles of youth, the hopes of love, dwells in the simple majesty of her regrets, behind the sombre walls of the Escorial or the Royal palace of Madrid, bending over the cradle in which lies her son and her King, guarding his heritage with devoted and loving care, changing the mistrust of the nation into reverent loyalty, healing the wounds of parties

with a gentle or pleading word, winning respect by her unconditional surrender to the claims of duty, and with her soft maternal hands adding strength and durability to the throne on which the baby King will sit one day.

"Carmen Sylva," the poet Queen of Roumania, has shed a more brilliant lustre on her crown than her consort; Nathalie of Servia, by the magic of her charms, had fascinated her people before her sorrows and trials made so irresistible an appeal to their chivalrous sympathy. Princess Clementine, at a time when kings fall, created a king whom she succeeded in maintaining against Europe and Europe's domineering master : Bismarck. She bade her son "play his head against a sceptre;" and the young officer of the Austrian army, who was deemed effeminate because he reared birds and wore a bangle on his wrist, inspired by the audacity and ambition of his mother, threw himself bravely into the struggle, and to this day has upheld the honour of her race. Draped in her weeds, the ex-Empress of the French, from her mournful exile at Farnborough, still sways the destinies of the Imperialist party in France, and patiently

binds together again the links that ever and anon snap asunder through family quarrels. At the Hague, a small maiden of nine is carefully trained so that she may fitly wear the royal purple, which at any moment may slip from the shoulders of her aged father; and it is a youthful mother who prepares the child for her responsibilities as future Queen of the Netherlands. In Brazil, the Comtesse d'Eu has made her apprenticeship in the art of government by assuming the Regency during the Emperor's late travels in Europe, and proved herself so worthy of her dignities that the Pope sent her the Golden Rose in acknowledgment of the great humanitarian Act with which her name will ever remain connected. The distant quarters of the inhabited globe sent their dusky Queens to do homage before Queen Victoria during the festivities which celebrated, with such pomp and splendour, the fiftieth year of the longest reign of a woman.

It would almost seem as if the weakness of womanhood became its strongest armour, and as if the debility of the frailer sex raised the safest barriers between thrones and revolutions.

Supreme power appears more sacred and invulnerable to the masses when it is vested in hands that lack the physical strength to defend it by main force.

We have seen the storms that shook Europe to its very foundations during the last fifty years expire harmless at the feet of Britain's Queen, and the convulsions that altered the face of the Continent leave untouched the empire over which the sun never sets. Neither 1848, a date equally fatal to Vienna, Berlin, and Paris, nor 1870, when wars raged and subsequent treaties reversed old frontiers and altered denominations, endangered the security of Queen Victoria's omnipotence; the ruler of three hundred millions of human beings remained untouched by the tide of events, as serene and placid in her middle age as the young girl on whom was thrust the sovereignty over five parts of the world, and who has enjoyed half a century of peace and honour.

The first of the three living wives of German Monarchs is the Dowager Empress Augusta. She is the daughter of the Duke of Weimar,

and in her bright girlhood was the central figure of the small but cultivated and literary Court on which Goethe cast the imperishable halo of his genius. She witnessed the slow and gradual decline of the great poet's brilliant faculties without being less penetrated with reverence for his grandeur; but before she had time to outgrow her enthusiasm, she found herself transplanted by her marriage with the brother of the King of Prussia into purely military surroundings, which, if not alien as far as language and a common German Fatherland were concerned, remained, nevertheless, in striking and uncongenial contrast with the more refined and intellectual instincts developed by her early education.

The prestige of Weimar as the residence, if not the actual birth-place, of both Goethe and Schiller was so great that it filled the neighbouring towns of Cassel and Gotha with ill-repressed jealousy. In the humiliation of their inferior fame, they attempted to revile the old city by calling it derisively a *necropolis*, whose titles to glory rested solely on the tombs of two illustrious men; they feigned to wonder

at what Weimar would have been, shorn of the reflected splendour of the dead heroes. The justly incensed inhabitants respond indignantly to this taunt, that without the peaceful atmosphere, the serene calm, the soothing repose of Weimar, there would probably have been no Schiller and no Goethe. Without pondering on this deplorable possibility, it is certain that the Grand Ducal residence has at one time or another attracted all the celebrities in Letters and in Arts which Germany possesses. To this day the pilgrims of an intellectual faith resort to it as good Mussulmans travel to Mecca, and deem their journey well repaid when they have gazed on the dwelling-houses and last resting-places of the two great men.

Schiller's abode is a small, unpretending edifice of one floor only, with three little windows looking upon the street, and it still contains the scanty, modest, original furniture of its simple-minded owner. Goethe's home, of a far more imposing appearance, could, however, not be visited internally. It used to be inhabited by one of his descendants, who held the world and publicity in abhorrence, and lived

a barren and solitary existence, overweighted by the name he bore, which seemed to him disproportionate to his merits, although these were of no mean quality. In 1856 there still lived at Weimar two maiden ladies of the name of Herder, directly related to the author of "Faust," who were entirely provided for by the Grand Duke, treated with extreme respect by the Court, and when they expressed a desire to visit the theatres, were conducted to the best seats in the house free of charge. It was a constant preoccupation of the rulers of Weimar to honour the memory of Goethe in every possible manner, and the Empress Augusta, brought up in this reverential atmosphere, was unconsciously imbued with the same beliefs.

The Grand Ducal family of Weimar, by its alliances and its status in Germany, had acquired an importance which did not seem warranted by the circumscribed area of the territory over which it reigned. The Grand Duchess Dowager, who died in 1858, was a daughter of the Emperor Paul I. of Russia, sister of the Emperor Nicholas, and aunt of Alexander III. Educated in a sumptuous and elegant Court, this Princess had

attempted to transfer its customs and traditions to her German duchy. She had succeeded as far as it was in the power of her limited scope, and Weimar ranked high among the polished centres of Europe. Her daughter Augusta, known after her marriage as Princess of Prussia, frequently visited her parents, and on certain special occasions was accompanied by her husband, in whom no one could foresee then the future first Emperor of a united Germany. The young wife had already become what she has never ceased to be—an accomplished, eminently representative Princess. Long after the first blush of youth had faded she was a superbly handsome woman; her shoulders especially were magnificent, and it is noteworthy that no portraits of her exist which are not taken in evening dress. For the last twenty years, however, since the cruel illness which left her wan and changed and still racks her frame with cruel pain, she has obstinately refused to sit again to painter or photographer. It is her wish to live in the memory of her people with her beauty undimmed, her sculptural form unimpaired, and she shrinks with morbid dread

from exposing, even to her *intimes*, the ravages she now feels powerless to hide.

From the earliest days of her union with William I. she realised that she would be more his consort than his wife. He yielded to her every outward show of respect, deference, and affection; he loved her even after his fashion, but he never gave her his entire confidence. She was from the first systematically excluded from all Councils on public affairs, and, whether as Regent, Queen, or Empress, assigned a secondary place. The Iron Chancellor purposely relegated her to a silent obscurity in matters of State. He mistrusted her sympathies, and dreaded the consequences of any initiative she might be tempted to take, steadily counter-acting the influence that the Princess might have acquired over her husband during the semi-retirement of Coblenz. Debarred from the pursuits which would have realised her dreams of ambition, too proud to struggle when she knew she was only courting defeat, too dignified to show disappointment or regret, the Empress Augusta accepted the situation, such as it was made for her, and seemed to find all the dis-

tractions and occupation she wanted in busying herself with the rules of etiquette and deeds of charity. However, as a tacit retaliation on Bismarck, she henceforth ceased to make any mystery of her sympathies for France and her leaning towards Catholicism; she openly professed her partiality for French literature and her appreciation of French wit. It was her feminine way of avenging herself on her enemy.

No woman in this century understood in so high a degree the graces and minutiae of royal receptions; she had the rare and precious gift of tact. Always when holding her *cercle* at Court ceremonies she addressed a few well-chosen words to each person present, and has never been known to experience embarrassment or awkwardness when suddenly confronted with a stranger. She had the formulary of Courts at her finger-ends; in her clear, high-pitched, slightly ringing voice she improvised a conversation—mostly a one-sided one—with wonderful facility, sparing the other party even the trouble of responding, and never committing a blunder: a princely faculty, people used to say; a princely duty she considered it, but performed

by her with such unfailing ease that none suspected the effort. She had inherited this art from her Russian mother.

The Empress Augusta writes and speaks French with great purity and perfection; she has read all that is worth reading in that language, and loved to dissert on literature, with a little German pedantry, perhaps, but also with intelligent thoughtfulness. During the Franco - German war she manifested a tender interest in the vanquished prisoners and wounded, over whom she always strove to exercise a generous protection. She had conceived an ardent admiration for Monseigneur Dupanloup, and she expressed herself in eloquent and enthusiastic terms on the character and writings of him whom she called "*l'inoubliable Evêque d'Orléans*." One day, finding herself in presence of a Frenchman whose brother had been killed at the battle of Reichshofen, she said to him, with touching delicacy: "Will you allow me, monsieur, to shake hands with you?" These small traits, in which the woman stood revealed under the mask of the sovereign, are the only ones which have ever justified the

reproach, at one time addressed to her, of not being sufficiently patriotic.

Dividing her time between the strict observance of etiquette and numerous works of benevolence, the Empress Augusta founded several hospitals, asylums, and schools, or *Stiften* as they are called in Germany; but even in the exercise of charity she remained constantly preoccupied with the dignity and majesty of representation. She took as much pains to prepare herself for a visit to a sick ward as for a State ceremony, and she submitted heroically to hours of painful manipulation before appearing in public, however humble and few the spectators she had to face, rather than they should read on her wasted features the tale of bodily suffering she tried so valiantly to suppress. Almost at the time when the fate of war allowed her to exchange the title of Queen of Prussia for the higher-sounding one of Empress of Germany, she met with a severe accident at Baden-Baden, and never recovered from the effects of her fall. Months of suffering changed her into a prematurely old and haggard woman, the mournful shadow of her

former self; but they did not shake her indomitable energy nor her resolution to appear regal to the end. Whenever a foreign sovereign passed through Berlin she braced herself for the ordeal, and, half-hidden under heavy robes and priceless laces, her mouth trained to simulate the old pleasant smile, she would be wheeled into the throne-room in her bath-chair, murmur a few graceful words in a low, broken voice, and disappear like a ghostly phantom of royal dignity. It was thus that Count Ferdinand de Lesseps saw her in 1887, when he was sent to Berlin with the *Grand Cordon* of the Legion of Honour for M. Herbette, the French Ambassador to Germany. He was invited to an informal reception at the palace to be presented to their Imperial Majesties. The Empress entered the circular drawing-room in the manner above described, and was wheeled to her place near the velvet-covered table on which stood the tea equipage. As soon as the Count was brought up to her, she smiled and said:

“You see, M. de Lesseps, I was expecting you, for I am wearing a gown *couleur eau du Nil*.”

When she was still able to drive in an open carriage, she suddenly found that the power of bowing repeatedly in acknowledgment of the respectful salute of the people was failing her, and that the act caused her intolerable pain ; but in order not to omit the expected courtesy, and unwilling to give up a beneficial exercise, she had an ingenious mechanism applied to her carriage, which, being set in motion by the foot of the lady-in-waiting who accompanied her, imparted to her figure an artificial inclination.

She has now for many years submitted herself to a treatment of *massage*, which, although painful in itself, seems to be the only possible means of allaying the severity of local pain. The operation is performed by an aged Silesian peasant woman of over seventy years of age, who has the natural healing gifts of so many country people of that province, besides the qualifications of a good *rubber*. It has puzzled many physicians to find out in what those gifts lie, but they are compelled to admit facts which science refuses to elucidate. The old lady, Frau Miersemann, who has lost none of the frank rusticity of her cottage life, is never allowed

to be long absent from her patient. She is a fine, hale, hearty woman, who does not look her age, and possesses a strong countenance and bright piercing eyes. She has her *entrée* wherever the Empress is, gives her opinion freely and unasked, and as she has a social frame of mind, she delights in being present at all the Court ceremonies, which she surveys from some quiet corner or gallery with all the appearance of lively enjoyment, and comments upon them afterwards with racy appreciation. In order to keep her always near at hand, and yet not separate Frau Miersemann entirely from her kith and kin, she is authorised to invite her married daughter to Berlin, where all her expenses are paid. *Die Masseuse* is a character and something of a power; but she is impervious to all blandishments, innocent of intrigue, sincerely devoted to the Empress, disinterested, independent, and honestly proud of her art, in which she has boundless confidence.

The Empress Augusta has never felt much love for her daughter-in-law, the Princess Victoria; and the coolness existing between them is easily accounted for by the fact that

the two women have not one common sympathy. They are both intelligent, cultured, and refined ; they have the same impulses of charity and benevolence ; but they were kept asunder by their strong personal national prejudices. They had against each other a mutual grievance on different grounds. It was not that the Empress Augusta was too German, but that she was too French ; it was not that the Princess Victoria was not German enough, but that she was too English. This apparently immaterial divergence was in reality the serious but unacknowledged reason of their lack of intimacy, which was all the more conspicuous in a Court where the little familiarities of "home life" were practised in a degree rarely found near the throne. Minor differences helped to accent their mutual relations. The younger lady was as averse to official receptions, the trammels of etiquette, the slavery of dress, as the elder professed a sincere belief in their necessity. The latter played her part on the royal stage to the end ; the former chafed and rebelled against the obligations of her rank, all the more, perhaps, that for twenty-five long years she was debarred

from filling the first place she so ardently coveted. Disdaining for herself the artifices of make-up, wearing her hair in smooth bands, her shoes without heels, Princess Victoria had the half-pitying contempt of an intelligent woman, conscious of her moral superiority, for the beauty and elegance of a rival whose aim in life is to please and command respect and admiration.

The Empress Augusta on one occasion transgressed the law of silence which she had determined to observe in all public matters—she openly expressed her displeasure that an English physician should have been summoned to officiate at the birth of her first grandchild—a proceeding hitherto unprecedented at the Prussian Court—and she bitterly resented the accident which injured the infant's arm, attributing it solely to the want of skill of the foreign practician. Her unguarded comments helped to foster the dislike and objections which William II. always entertained against English medical men; and the impression so early received, kept alive by the secret irritation caused by his maimed limb and the condolences of his grandmother, accounts in a great mea-

sure for his attitude during his father's last illness.

Except in this one instance, the aged Empress was too much of the old school to encourage familiarity or liberty of speech in the younger generations. She reared her children to treat her with more deference than fondness; they kissed her hand oftener than her cheek. She remains, perhaps, the last living incarnation of old world Royalty, of the Queens who, deeply imbued with the solemnity and prestige of their state, heroically resolve to maintain the outer manifestations of it at any cost, and to drape themselves so majestically in their regal robes that neither their courtiers, their subjects, nor the world ever suspected the crumbling ruins which they concealed.

During the short months of her reign the Empress Frederick has shown that if she did not possess all the qualities requisite to govern, she had a force of will which would, under any circumstances, assert itself victoriously. Her extraordinary lucidity of mind, her constant intercourse with *savants* and artists, her powers

of assimilation which enabled her to gather knowledge at all these prolific sources, her extensive reading, combined to make her a remarkable woman. At the time of her marriage she undoubtedly loved her husband with the fond young love of a girl in her teens for a handsome and fascinating soldier. That love, embittered for a while by unreasoning and unfounded jealousy, was gradually superseded by the calm and indulgent affection of a superior matured intellect for a gentle unresisting companion, great and strong in the eyes of the nation, upright and honourable bar none, but supple and yielding in his domestic relations. Disappointed of a political field for her energy, the Crown Princess strove to beguile her higher ambition, and to occupy her forced inactivity by dipping deeper than most of her sex into abstruse and metaphysical researches. She shook herself free of what she had learnt to call superstition, and became more than liberal in her religious views. The all but atheistic movement in Germany carried her away with it, and if she did not embrace its tenets in their entirety, or abjure all her own,

she at least modified the beliefs she had brought into her adopted country, and became a disciple of the new ideas.

In her frequent journeys to Italy she acquired a taste for art, and perfected herself on her return under the guidance of distinguished artists. She thus acquired a certain skill in the handling of brush and chisel, and it was her pleasure to distribute among her friends and the members of her suite paintings and bits of sculpture, the work of her own hands. Countless statuettes of Italian beggar-boys occupy the place of honour in German households of the *bourgeoisie*, purchased at fairs or bazaars, and sold as the charitable contribution of the Crown Princess.

In emulation or rivalry of the Empress Augusta, she has also created schools, convalescent homes, *crèches*, and asylums, which she visits regularly. She is immensely popular with children, and the little inmates of her foundations, both at the sea-side and at Potsdam, look eagerly for the advent of "the gracious lady of Bonnstedt." She is honorary colonel of a regiment of Hussars of the Guard,

and there exists a very good portrait of her where she is represented on horseback reviewing the regiment at the military manœuvres in Silesia. This was her concession to the warlike spirit which is the very essence of the nature of the Hohenzollern family she had entered. Since then she succeeded in converting the stalwart Crown Prince, the victorious hero of bloody battles, into a "family man;" she surrounded him with homely comforts, made his palace as cosily habitable as a private residence, and insensibly brought him to centre his aspirations in the domestic circle. She knew the strength of the invisible but irresistible ties which bind a powerful yet tender manhood to his hearth, and the force of the yoke that bends the apparently harder organisation under the frail persistent will of the softer one. The secret of her influence over Frederick I. was the motherly nursing, the tender flattering care she lavished on him, the intelligent soothing of his fears, the lulling of his ambition, the occult weaning from other spheres and drawing him into her own. She repeated to him so often that "the title she most coveted

was that of fireside angel," that she led him to believe that his fireside was a temple more sacred than that of glory, and she stifled before him the impatient cry which had risen so often her lips that others had caught the sound: "Oh, to be Empress only an hour!"

When that wish was granted at last—as wishes often are—too late, it was through her energy, her determination, her unwavering perseverance, that the newly-made Emperor rose from his bed of pain to ascend the steps of his throne, and by his first act as sovereign, confer on her the greatest favour in his royal gift.

Practical and positive in all she undertakes, the Empress Frederick has always personally superintended the education of her children, her household, and her Court. Her laws were strict, immutable, never to be broken or infringed upon; she declined advice, and brooked no interference. Fortunately her management was excellent, her administration sensible, her views just on the whole, and under her rule her sons and daughters have grown up into wise and clever men and women.

Rising at six in the summer and at seven during the severe Prussian winters, she expected her whole establishment to be in full working order at that early hour, and saw with her own eyes that upper and under servants, nurses, tutors, governesses, and officials were each at their appointed post. She assisted at morning prayers, at the first lessons, and simple breakfast. Every hour of the day was portioned out in school-room and nursery for study, meals, exercise, and recreation. Every evening she examined the pupils on their work, made herself cognisant of their progress, and conversed with them a short time in English, French, and Italian before sending them to bed. She is a good linguist, but her predilections in literature are for the Russian.

The Crown Princess thought it necessary that each of her children should possess a thorough knowledge, not only of some art, but of some manual employment or trade. The present Emperor, notwithstanding the dominant military tastes which are supposed to have extinguished in him all others, can manufacture very good gloves; Prince Henry, the future

Admiral of the German navy, is a good clock-maker ; their sisters can cook, cut out and make dresses, and trim bonnets ; their father himself was an expert jeweller and silversmith. These practical accomplishments do not prevent the young Princesses from being good musicians and fair painters.

Nothing has ever escaped Princess Victoria's vigilant glance ; she notices a dereliction in the dress of a housemaid, whose costume she has regulated even to the shape of cap and apron, as quickly as she used to discern a fault or a failing in her children. She punished both with characteristic decision.

Prince Henry, when quite a small boy, had an insuperable objection to his bath, and every morning his nursery was the scene of tears, screams, and violent struggles. After having vainly tried to enforce silent submission to the matutinal ablutions, the mother gave the child's nurses the order to let him have his own way, and to let him dispense with his bath. Prince Henry, deeming himself the victor in the contest, was prematurely exultant. On the first morning after his unexpected triumph he sallied

forth proudly for his daily walk in the park of Babelsberg, with little taunting remarks to his attendants; but returning home, he noticed that the sentinel at the further gates did not present arms as he passed. Child as he was, the blood of his punctilious military race ran through his veins, and he knew enough what was his due not to resent the omission. On reaching the palace, a second sentinel proved equally remiss and oblivious of his approach. This was too much for the little fellow, who walked up to the negligent soldier, and asked severely:

“Do you know who I am?”

“Yes, *Hoheit*,” said the man, standing motionless.

“*Who* am I?” insisted the child.

“Prinz Heinrich.”

“Why don’t you salute, then?”

“Because we do not present arms to an unwashed prince.”

The sentinels had privately received their orders from the Crown Princess.

The child said not a word. Two great tears of shame welled into his eyes, which he man-

fully kept from rolling on his flushed cheeks, and the next day not a sound or murmur proclaimed that Prince Henry was taking his bath.

The Princess Imperial, in spite of her positive and practical nature, is not wanting in a certain womanly tact and kindness of manner and expression, which has endeared her to those on whom she has bestowed those precious—because so rare—tokens of generous sympathy. A few years after the Franco-German war, the French uniform reappeared for the first time in Germany at the great autumn military manoeuvres. At the review which ended them, Colonel Grandin, who wore it, was on horseback with the staff awaiting the arrival of the Emperor. The rain fell in torrents, but as William I. appeared on the field the officers could see, riding at his side, a woman covered by a long waterproof cape; it was the Princess Imperial. When she reached the group of the *Etat Major*, she stopped and looked around her, as if seeking some one; then suddenly advancing towards Colonel Grandin, she said aloud:

“Colonel, I am particularly pleased to see you to-day.”

The Frenchman bent low on the neck of his horse as the Princess continued :

“Yes, particularly pleased, because it is the 9th of September ;” and seeing that neither the officer addressed nor the generals around her understood these words, she added pointedly : “and the 9th of September is the anniversary of the surrender of Sebastopol—the day on which your country and mine won a victory together.”

She instinctively felt the pain of the representative of the defeated nation in the midst of the triumphant troops of the enemy, and with the glorious allusion effaced the humiliation of recent disasters.

The third Empress of Germany, Augusta Victoria, uniting in her own the names of her two predecessors, differs from them in almost every respect. She is, however, neither the nonentity nor the Griselda which it has of late been the custom to represent her—a description which suited the purposes of her rivals, and prevented her own more modest but not less real individuality from being suspected and recognised. She has been, it is true, during

the brief years of her married life, engrossed by the fatigues and duties of maternity, and her chances of occupying her present high position seemed then so remote that people were willing to accept her only as the pleasant, smiling, good-natured, youthful "Princess Wilhelm." She has no inclination to rebel against her lot in life. She does not know, perhaps, that according to the dictum of Napoleon I. she is the most distinguished woman of Germany by the mere fact of having given the Fatherland five sons; but she has personal tastes, likings, and dislikes as genuine, if less *prononcé*, than those of the older imperial ladies. She is far from being merely a German *hausfrau*, with no thoughts save the nursery and kitchen. She is a sensible, intelligent, kind-hearted, affectionate, and simple-minded woman, with a fair, gentle face, a fresh, healthy complexion, blue eyes, smooth hair gathered in a knot on the top of her head, and an expression so kindly and sweet that no one who has come under the witchery of her tender glances has ever been heard to say she was not handsome.

When, in 1881, the presumptive heir to the

German crown, Prince William, married the youthful grandniece of Prince Frederick of Sleswig-Holstein, it was not generally considered that the alliance was worthy of him, and the bride was in consequence not very rapturously welcomed in Berlin. The Crown Princess, who is keenly appreciative of originality and force of character, made no secret of her indifference to the girl who seemed to possess neither, she was not interested in her and did not care to conceal the fact. On the other hand her daughter-in-law unconsciously committed the graver offence of reminding her constantly, by the sole fact of her presence, that she might eventually be seated on the throne before *she*—the first in hereditary—had the chance of occupying it, and not all the gentle unassumingness of Princess Wilhelm could mitigate against that secret dread.

The young Empress has no talent for music or painting; she is well-informed, for she was carefully trained; she reads the books recommended by Pastor Stocker, never suffers from *ennui*, the bane of more active minds, adores her children, and worships her husband. She

is perfectly happy when she drives with him and her sons in an open carriage, and watches the loyal greetings of the crowd; for this simple pleasure she would gladly forego State balls and Court pageants. She is fitted by her nature to be the consort of her energetic, peremptory, positive young husband, for she claims no other privilege than to be a faithful, loving, unexacting wife.

In her elevation she remembers without *fausse honte* the days when she was a modest, almost penurious little Princess; she craves for no costly or extravagant display, and she has endeared herself to the women of Berlin society not over-burdened by the world's goods, through tactful consideration and thoughtful sympathy. Thus, when the Court was plunged in deepest mourning by the death of the two Emperors, she declined to hold a "Court," because, according to etiquette, all the ladies would have to attend in entirely white gala robes and trains, and she knew enough of the thrifty German ways to realise how gladly most of the ladies would be exempted from the onerous expenses of the *costume de rigueur*, especially

after the equally heavy outlay for black garments a few months before.

Much capital has been made of the alleged influence of Countess Waldersee over the Empress Augusta, while nothing can be more natural than their intimacy. The ties of quasi-relationship existing between the Empress and the Countess more than justify a friendship which has been attributed to other causes, or in some instances denied in order to cast a cruel insinuation against all the parties concerned. Twenty-five years ago, Miss Mary Esther Lee, the daughter of a New York banker, was travelling in Europe. Her extraordinary beauty and cleverness captivated Prince Frederick of Sleswig-Holstein, grand-uncle of the Empress Augusta. He fell desperately in love with the American belle, and removing all obstacles in the way of his passion, was morganatically married to her in Paris, in November, 1864, having previously obtained from the Emperor of Austria that he should, by letters patent, bestow upon Miss Lee her naturalisation in that country, and the title of Princess of Noër. Seven months later,

before the surprise and discontent created by this step had subsided, and while the couple were still protracting their wedding journey, Prince Frederick was struck down in Styria by apoplexy, and died suddenly. His widow found herself, at twenty-seven, alone, unprotected, possessed of a considerable fortune, a high-sounding title, and unimpaired attractions. She immediately became the focus of all eyes, and the object of countless amorous and matrimonial pursuits; she declined some advantageous offers, and at the close of her first year of mourning, selected from among her suitors Count Waldersee, a German officer of good family and brilliant prospects. She was not mistaken in her estimate of her second husband's chances of ultimate advancement. Her dreams of ambition were realised; the Count's military career was as rapid as it was distinguished, and her social triumphs were equally remarkable. Her *salon* in Berlin has been for a long time the rendez-vous of all the celebrities of the capital; it was also the centre in which met all the politicians and people of the Court devoted to Prince Bismarck, and, as a natural deduction, antago-

nistic to the English views entertained by the future Empress Frederick. But it was not from any particular political bias that the young Princess of Sleswig-Holstein sought the company of the Countess Waldersee on her arrival, or was afterwards frequently seen with her. In the natural awkwardness and embarrassment of her first introduction to a new life, in which deep differences divided her nearest relatives, where she felt, more than she divined, a hostile sentiment to herself, it was but natural that the shy young girl should turn gratefully to themorganatic wife of her great-uncle, who, to do her justice, took pains to smooth and soften the difficult beginnings of her initiation.

Remarkably handsome still, with a natural tact and shrewdness developed and refined in the atmosphere of Courts, the Countess Waldersee had made her house agreeable to Prince Wilhelm in his bachelor days. It is not strange, therefore, that he witnessed with satisfaction the growing intimacy between his young wife and his old friend, and that he entrusted the social guidance of the timid and inexperienced Princess to the clever and superior woman to whom he

had so often gone for enlightened sympathy and encouragement. There, however, the mission of the Princess de Noër ends; she will never sway, for weal or for woe, the destinies of the German Empire. She is too conscious of her own value to be a docile political instrument, and not strong enough to make tools of others. Apart from her personal charm, her chief claim to the favour of a certain clique is her sincere, warmly expressed partisanship of the Chancellor, and her staunch womanly affection for the young Emperor.

However much the latter appreciates the undoubted mental qualities of Countess Waldersee, he is not likely to forget that Victoria Augusta has realised his paternal hopes beyond his most sanguine expectations, and that she has presented him in rapid succession with four healthy boys, who bid fair to uphold the reputation for manly beauty of the hardy scions of the Hohenzollern race.

The salient characteristics of the three first ladies of the German Empire stood confessed, by a mute and humble testimony, at a fancy fair held for charitable purposes at Berlin in

December, 1887. The centre of attraction seemed to be a table on which a few articles were offered for sale, apparently inferior in quality and value to other more important and pretentious exhibits. One was a photograph of a handsome woman in the evening dress which Winterhalter loved to paint, signed with the bold elegant autograph, "Augusta, Imperatrix et Regina;" another was a small Italian landscape, with the artist's name in an English hand, "Victoria;" and close to these, six dainty pairs of tiny knitted socks, with no clue to the donor's identity.

They were the contributions of the three Empresses of Germany.

CHAPTER II.

Queen of Roumania, Carmen Sylva—Queen Nathalie
of Servia.

IN some exquisitely feminine hands, according to Victor Hugo's graceful simile, "the sceptre is held like a flower;" and never can the application be more justly made than in speaking of the fair poet Queen, whose childhood and maidenhood were spent in the spicy shadows of boundless forests, who breathed in their midst the wild and tender spirit of Uhland's muse, and is known to the world of thinkers and readers under the charming pseudonym of Carmen Sylva.

Had the Queen of Roumania trod the humbler walks of life, she still would have made her mark in the literary world by her command of language and elevation of expression. The "*Pensées d'une Reine*," a book of deep and sincere

feeling, in which sorrow has been analysed with the perceptions of experience and womanly insight, shows that the author has probed the human heart, till out of the very hopelessness of pain, resignation is born. The French Academy has, quite lately, vouchsafed to that volume an honour of which it is not generally prodigal to foreigners, and it was publicly crowned at the great annual distribution of prizes in the autumn of 1888. Carmen Sylva's pen has not been idle: she wrote successively the "*Contes du Peleck*," a novel which has been translated into French; "*Astra*," a poem; "*The Witch*" and "*Jessah*," both rich in noble aspirations; and a collection of Roumanian legends, the original being in German, in which she has included some verses of M. Alexandri, a Roumanian poet, who represents his country in Paris.

Elizabeth Pauline Ottilia is a daughter of the Prince of Wied, and the Duchess of Nassau, who is a sister of the Queen of Sweden. She is indebted to her early training for a virility of mind and an extent of serious information such as does not often fall to the share of her sex.

Her father imbued her with the philosophy of the eighteenth century; he had been in his youth a great traveller, and had brought back from distant lands, notably from America, more advanced notions than those prevailing in the lesser German principalities, and passed for a man of progressive scientific ideas. He had had several children, united to each other by an affection of no ordinary fervour. The premature death of a beloved younger brother affected the Princess Elizabeth so profoundly that she refused for a time to be comforted; her health as well as her spirits suffering from the shock, she was, as a last resource, sent for change of scene to her aunt, the Grand Duchess Helene, at St. Petersburg. In the society of that remarkable woman, among the *habitués* of her brilliant *salon*, the young girl found the distraction she required, and at the same time enjoyed the privilege of listening to the most distinguished *causeurs* of the day. The simple, austere, and almost claustral education she had received at Neuwied was developed and perfected in no ordinary degree under the favourable auspices of her new surroundings. It was there that the young Princess learned

how to become a queen. She was endowed with quick perceptions, a lively imagination, subtle tact, a splendid organisation, and an artistic temperament; with rapid intuition she assimilated the finest characteristics of those she admired; her natural talents responded with surprising promptitude to the teachings she received. Always fond of music, she became at St. Petersburg the pupil of Anton Rubinstein, whom she astonished by her progress, and in remembrance of the lessons he had given her he afterwards dedicated to Queen Elizabeth one of his finest compositions, "The Sulamite."

The death of the Prince of Wied, which occurred suddenly, awakened in the heart of his sensitive daughter the bitterness of her first bereavement, and she mourned for him with the same abandonment of grief, shutting herself up in absolute seclusion. To rouse her from this morbid condition, which inspired alarm to her *entourage*, her mother insisted upon taking her to Berlin, where she met Prince Charles of Roumania. A conformity of literary and artistic tastes soon caused the acquaintance to

ripen into love, and as there could be no opposition to a match which appeared suitable in every respect, the lovers were married in 1869. The bride came to her new country determined to adopt it as her own, and lavished on Roumania all her warm, womanly enthusiasm, all the fire of her poetical imagination. Her great beauty and winning charm of manner soon achieved the complete subjugation of the nation; she was everywhere idolised. The whole land associated itself unanimously with her joy when a son was born to her, and wept with the mother when she lost her first-born. The brave heart was crushed by this new and cruel blow; she learnt that there was a greater agony than mourning over a brother and a father.

A dangerous illness was the result of her uncontrollable grief. She lived, but only to find that the power of using her limbs was gone, and to suffer exquisite bodily pain, which she bore with heroic fortitude. At last her physicians advised her to go to Holland, and place herself under the care of the already famous Amsterdam doctor, Metzger, who tried on her his system of *massage*. His treatment

effected an almost miraculous cure, and he had the satisfaction of sending the Princess back to Bukarest with restored strength and renewed energy and hope.

It was well for Carmen Sylva that it was so, for the Russian-Turkish war had broken out, and she was braced for the deeds which count among the finest exploits of her life. Clad in the livery of the nurses of the Red Cross, the sovereign was merged in the ambulance sister. She spent her days in the military hospitals, tending the sick, dressing their wounds, soothing the dying, turning from no office, however repulsive, bent only on alleviating pain and mitigating the horrors of war. The Roumanian troops, in a transport of loyalty and gratitude, afterwards voted and subscribed for the erection of a memorial group, in which their beloved Elizabeth is represented in her ambulance garb, lifting a cup of water to the lips of a recumbent wounded soldier.

With her very life blood Roumania had bought the right of declaring her independence, proclaiming herself a kingdom, and placing on a Royal throne Prince Charles and his

consort. The ceremony of the coronation took place in the palace of Bukarest. From all parts of the land flocked the peasants in their striking national costume, eager to do homage to the royal couple. The heroic combatants who had been wounded in the battles of Plevna and Grinitza were allotted a special place of honour in the pageant. The crown placed on the head of the newly made King was, by a patriotic inspiration, wrought from the steel of the cannon captured from the enemy.

This episode closed that portion of the life of Queen Elizabeth which more strictly appertains to history. She was now free to devote herself to the pursuits she loved, and to which she had been able to give so little time during the troubled days of her early married life. She divided her hours of leisure between poetry, music, and the sister art of architecture. The King, who shared her delight in the latter, was, with her, the designer and builder of the splendid mountain residence of Sinaïa, half palace and half castle. M. Storrer, the practical architect, worked under the direct supervision of his Royal employer, and the result

of their combined plans was an edifice as remarkable in its way as far-famed Fontainebleau. The details have the same completeness which Francis I. rewarded in so kingly a fashion, when he extended his largesse to the Italian sculptors and wood-carvers whom he summoned from the South to adorn and embellish his forest castle.

The extensive wood-carvings of Sinaïa are imitated, but not copied, from those of the sixteenth century, so that while in perfect keeping with the general style selected by the King, they have an originality which imparts to the whole building a stamp of personal individuality. In her private apartments, the Queen has relieved the prevailing severity of decoration by those feminine touches which are the material evidence of her artistic organisation. Fine pictures hang against a background of rich-hued Eastern fabrics, and wherever they can be placed bloom the flowers of which Carmen Sylva is extravagantly fond.

The music saloon is a large apartment devoid of any superfluous ornamentation; it is admirably suited to its purpose, and the first glance shows that it has been planned by a

sincere lover of music. It is entirely wainscoted in dark wood, against which are built carved stalls like those in the choir of a cathedral. The irritating sound of moving chairs is thus suppressed, and the silent austerity of the interior compels the reverent attention of the audience. The stained glass windows testify to the admiration of the Queen for the national poet of Roumania, for they represent scenes taken from Alexandri's works. Often at dusk Carmen Sylva seeks this shadowy hall, and taking her seat before the organ, she allows her white hands to wander over the keys. After a vague prelude she bursts into a brilliant improvisation, or lingers over a wild cadence. Sometimes she plays for hours in absolute solitude, at others she summons to her side her friend, Prince Alexander Bibesco, a true artist like herself, and there is little doubt but that those quiet evenings are the happiest in her life.

But above her devotion to art, the Queen of Roumania professes a more exalted creed. Her fundamental belief is that "kings are made for the nation;" and whenever she feels

herself carried away by some irresistible impatience of restraint, or inclined to rebel against the slavery of her rank, she bravely curbs the longing for unfettered freedom, and bends her proud head patiently under the yoke of her royal obligations. When these have been conscientiously fulfilled, then, and then only, the Queen considers herself at liberty to return to her own favourite occupations. The world has learnt what these were each time that a fresh volume has issued from her graceful pen. Much of her inner life can be guessed at in the pathetic pages of "A Prayer" and "A Life of Sorrow." She also wrote a play called *Dämmerung* (Twilight), represented with success in the Weimar Theatre in 1887.

Carmen Sylva was born in December, 1843, but no traces of age have yet marred the fair regularity of her features and the exquisite delicacy of her complexion; her eyes are large and blue and dreamy; she wears her hair drawn back from her broad white forehead; tall and slender, she moves and walks with the easy grace and perfect rhythm at once so admirable and so rare in a woman. Her dazzling teeth and

luminous eyes are at the first glance the most striking features in her countenance, but when she begins to speak with *abandon*, when a slight line furrows the corner of her eloquent lips, when a shadow of melancholy creeps across the fair expanse of the thoughtful forehead, it becomes easy to read her past experience, to realise how cruelly the womanly heart has been tried, and what acute capability for suffering exists in her highly strung nature. The lustrous eyes of the poet Queen, which shine so bright and clear upon her people, have more than once in the watches of the night been dimmed by bitter tears.

The literary and artistic celebrities of many lands have flocked around Carmen Sylva, sure of a flattering reception. Charles Gounod and Alphonse Daudet are welcome guests at Bukarest, and she has done for her Court what another Royal lady has attempted to do at Belgrade.

Both were moved by the same impulse when they decided almost simultaneously last year to obtain the support and influence of the Empress of Austria and the Czarina of Russia in favour

of Roumania and Servia respectively, trusting to their powers of persuasion where those of ordinary diplomacy failed. The Empress Elizabeth visited Carmen Sylva in her picturesque castle of Sinaïa, and it was at Livadia, the fairy palace in the Crimea, that Queen Nathalie sought to win, through the medium of the Empress Dagmar, the good graces of Alexander III.

Belgrade, like Bukarest, owes much of its present interest, apart from graver political considerations, to a woman. Queen Nathalie, like her husband's political foe, Alexander of Battenberg, is not of Royal blood. She is the daughter of Colonel Kechko, an officer in the Russian army, a boyard of Bessarabia, and of Princess Stroudza, a Roumanian lady. She was remotely related to Prince Milan, and descends lineally from a good old French family called Des Baulx, whose name was gradually converted into Balsa by Italian and Roumanian pronunciation. She was born in May, 1850, and married the reigning Prince of Servia in October, 1875.

It is difficult to do justice by description to the charm and exceeding beauty of Queen Nathalie. Her classical features combine, in a

piquant contrast, a commanding regal majesty and a playful girlish innocence. Her forehead is crowned by opulent tresses of black hair ; her almond-shaped eyes have a mingled expression of great tenderness and lively intelligence ; her rippling smile and silvery laughter irradiate her clear pale complexion, which recalls involuntarily her own Russian snows warmed into a glow by the sudden warmth of an Eastern sun. She is tall, graceful, and her manner has a subtle fascination, partly royal, and wholly feminine. She was educated at Odessa in a French convent, then under the direction of a distinguished professor, Monsieur Bruna, who is now at the head of the College of Aix.

Before the breaking out of the fatal Servian-Bulgarian war, when she was still happily unconscious of the destiny in store for her, when she had no presentiment that the day would dawn which would see her a wanderer throughout Europe, a Queen without a kingdom, a mother bereft of her son, a wife repudiated by her husband ; when she was still enjoying her popularity and the natural pride of her accession to the throne, Queen Nathalie had

successfully striven to make her remote little Court equal in elegance, grace, and refinement to the most brilliant ones of the West. She presided over it with innate tact, and enlivened it by her juvenile gaiety. In the small and inconvenient residence of the Konak—which was in those days the palace—she gave little *intime* balls; with the ladies in waiting, maids of honour and officers of her guard she used to dance the Russian mazurka with all the national *brio*. She would on other occasions appear in the picturesque costume of the Servian peasantry, and wear with patriotic grace the red head-gear studded with sequins, the gold-broidered vest, the full silken chemisette, and the ample skirt profusely ornamented in patterns of many colours. Thus attired she went through the slow, quaint, rhythmical figures of the *kolo*, an old-fashioned dance of the country, the monotonous cadence of which is, even yet, often heard in the still summer evenings on the lonely shores of the far Danube.

Without pedantry or any pretensions to being a blue-stocking, the Queen is well read, and possesses a solid and varied instruction

acquired in early youth. She is not a poet or an author like Carmen Sylva, but she speaks French fluently like all her compatriots, is thoroughly acquainted with the poetry of France, and reads all the books written in that language on history, which, strangely enough, is her favourite study. On the shelves of her private book-cases are seen a motley row of volumes which may be taken as the index of her tastes and intellectual sympathies; they all look as if they were frequently consulted and appealed to. Side by side with the classics and serious works are the pungent criticisms of Taine; the musical verse of François Coppée; the satirical pages of Sully Prudhomme, and the fictions of Alphonse Daudet. Singular as it may seem, the author of "*Les Rois en Exil*" is one of the few contemporary novelists who has found favour with queens, although they have met but scanty indulgence at his hands. Is it, that perhaps more than one, while reading of the trials and humiliations of Frédérique d'Illyrie, has been struck with some vague apprehension that a similar fate might one day be hers? If such a sinister foreboding ever

came to Queen Nathalie, she has lived to see its cruel realisation.

Diplomats have always been received with marked distinction at the Court of Belgrade, where they assume a far more important status than in the capitals that are within the pale of a higher civilisation. The social world of the city is restricted in numbers and not particularly attractive to foreigners, who were indebted to the Queen for the only intercourse in which they could forget that they had reached almost the confines of what they are accustomed to call the habitable globe. On the arrival and departure of Ministers, or even *Chargés d'Affaires*, a great State banquet is given at the palace. At dessert the national anthem of the country represented by the guest is played; the King selects that moment to propose his guest's health, invariably adding a few well-chosen words of welcome or farewell. Since the brusque departure of the Queen there are no balls at Court, but there are as many dinner parties as ever, and Madame Christitch—who played an important, if occult, part in the events which culminated in the Royal divorce—is always

present, wearing the splendid ornaments which are the tokens of the King's favour. The young Prince is often at his father's side during those receptions, but he retires at ten with his tutor, and shortly after the ladies withdraw. Then the real business of the evening commences. King Milan invites the Envoys of Austria and Turkey to remain; he precedes them into his private apartment, where some of his most habitual companions, including the inevitable M. Christitch, are in attendance. The shutters are closed, the curtains closely drawn, a round table is covered with the traditional green cloth, and a prolonged game of baccarat, called at Belgrade *macao*, entered upon, led by the King, who shuffles, deals, wins, and loses with perfect impassibility but unabated energy. Gambling is frequently protracted till morning; the creature comforts of the players are not forgotten, and the French cooks are kept up all night to send in relays of supper. During those long hours when he bends over the cards, the Servian sovereign seems to forget the worry of politics, the confusion of State affairs, the warnings of neighbouring potentates, and, above all, feverishly

anxious to drown in momentary excitement the annoyance and remorse of his conjugal troubles. It is well known in Belgrade that it is oblivion which he seeks in play. The foreign diplomats are willing to assist him in this endeavour. When the "hell" is not at the palace, it is transplanted to the foreign legations, and it is said that the Ministers are empowered to draw upon their Governments whenever the losses thus incurred are unusually high. The Republican Envoy of France alone protests against exorbitant stakes, and in his house regulates them on a most moderate scale.

During the last war and its humiliating sequels, Queen Nathalie proved herself a true soldier's daughter. She was unremitting in her efforts to encourage the vanquished, to rouse the energies of the fallen, to breathe new courage into the soul of the people. She found her reward in the name bestowed upon her by those she had so valiantly tried to brace for fresh resistance—they unanimously called her the Madonna of Kossovo. A Servian legend records how the Blessed Virgin appeared to the wounded soldiers on the battle-field of that

name, where, in a sanguinary conflict, Sultan Ahmurad found his death in 1389; but he had died victorious, and from that epoch dated the serfdom of Servia. The oppressed nation, crushed under Turkish tyranny, never forgot the catastrophe which made a Christian people the slave of the Mussulman, and five hundred years ago arresting the progress of civilisation, condemned it to a long impotence. Its picturesque folk-lore, its national songs and poems, contain frequent allusions to the supernatural vision which was considered as a divine promise and guerdon of hope.

In 1882 that promise was finally redeemed, and the guerdon held good. Servia saw herself enfranchised, but in the first triumphant flush of freedom she received a blow directed at the very roots of her young independence, and aimed by her Bulgarian enemy. When the fate of her country hung in the balance, Queen Nathalie's courage rose with the emergency; the hour of peril found her a heroine, and she has not wavered in the part she played then. Her husband, whose powers of resistance were not equal to hers, never forgave the burning words

with which she taunted his weakness when, in the first unmanly despair at his reverses, he was preparing to abdicate. He knows that it is to the dauntless spirit of a woman that he owes his throne, and that the ambition of a mother, fighting for her son's inheritance, alone kept in his vacillating hands a sceptre to bequeath to his heir; he has felt the rancour of a lesser mind smarting under a benefit received; he has listened to fulsome flattery because it made him forget the stigma of the Queen's ill-concealed contempt still branding his cheek, and he banished from his presence the uncompromising judge in whose eyes he read an eternal reproach.

To the very last day of her stay in Servia, Queen Nathalie lived in readiness to meet any fresh peril, to face a sudden storm, an outburst of revolution. She hardly ever allowed a day to pass without visiting some hospital or house of refuge, and was frequently seen in the most squalid quarters of the city, seeking the poor, and bringing her alms to their miserable hovels. When she entered a ward or approached a sick-bed, the sufferers lifted their wasted hands and made the sign of the cross, as before some sainted

vision. When she passed on foot in the streets of Belgrade, accompanied by a single lady-in-waiting, plainly dressed, and recognisable only by her beauty, children flew to kiss the hem of her garments, and mothers knelt at her feet craving permission to press their lips on the Royal hand always open for charity.

These are the memories which the exiled wife takes with her into banishment. The benedictions of the poor may, perhaps, soften the bitterness of her humiliation; they will weigh in the balance against a few hasty and imprudent words uttered when the woman's pride and the Queen's dignity had been too roughly wounded, as they bear witness to many noble qualities. It is only in very young nations that popular reverence and love for the sovereign finds a spontaneous expression; in older monarchies the enthusiasm is perfunctory, and merely a portion of a strictly regulated official programme. The monarchs who have gained victories, aggrandised their empire, endowed it with lasting monuments of prosperity and success, have won from their indifferent subjects less homage and gratitude than Colonel Kechko's beautiful daughter from

her half-barbaric people; and yet her very qualities, her energy and patriotism, the undisguised worship of the masses, have wrought her undoing.

Her only son, Prince Alexander, was born in 1876. Idolised by his mother, he grew up under her eyes; she watched over his infancy with jealous care, and when, with advancing years, she recognised the necessity of entrusting his education to more competent and virile hands, she still spent with her clever spirited boy all the hours he could spare from those maturer studies and active exercise in which she could no longer join. Will he remember her tenderness, will the trace of the tears that fell on his face in the cruel hour of parting linger in the little Prince's heart, or will the sharp pang of his forgetfulness be added to the mother's pain?

The love she once bore the King appeared at one time fully justified. Inexplicable as his conduct has been with regard to her lately, he was neither a bad nor an incapable man. He was, and is still, remarkably handsome; his intelligence had been developed by his French education. He spent his youth in Paris; his

studies were carried on under the supervision of M. François Huet, for whom, as well as his family, he has always professed a sincere attachment, not unmingled with gratitude, for M. and Madame Huet were almost as father and mother to him, and he lived in their house on the most intimate footing. In 1868 he was unexpectedly summoned to succeed his cousin, Prince Michel, who had been foully murdered in the park of Topchideré, and was eventually crowned King of Servia in 1882. To do him justice, it must be said that he devoted himself perseveringly to the improvement of the financial condition of the country, with such success that the public revenue increased in fifteen years from thirteen to thirty-four millions.

When the civil list of the newly proclaimed King and Queen was raised by the nation from 700,000 to 1,200,000 francs, the old residence of the Konak was no longer considered adequate to their exalted rank, and a new palace was built at Belgrade, with lofty, gaudy, and pretentious domes, a barbaric architecture and florid ornamentation. It does not, however, possess the solitary advantage of the discarded

Konak, which, although not much more than a one-storeyed villa, divided from the street by a railing and a narrow strip of garden, gave, on the rear, upon shady and extensive grounds, which a slight stretch of fancy might easily call a park.

At best, Belgrade was but a dull dwelling-place for a brilliant and imaginative woman. Its social resources are inferior to those of a third-rate English or Continental provincial town; its society even more mixed than in the majority of Moldavian and Wallachian cities; it is situated in the heart of those Danubian principalities where the development of culture and refinement is ever arrested by the fear of a popular outbreak or the perils of an invasion; and it labours, moreover, under the disadvantage of being the capital of a country sufficiently rich and geographically important enough to be the object of ambitious desires. The task of Queen Nathalie was not an easy one, and that she so firmly established herself in the affections of her people must ever redound to her credit. Even now, when the highest religious authority of Servia has pro-

nounced against her, and the judgment been received without open demur, in spite of the proverbial and ferocious ingratitude of individuals and nations, it is far from certain that should an appeal be made to the people the vote of the majority would not decide against King Milan for the "Madonna of Kossovo."

[The abdication of King Milan, which was announced while these pages were still in the press, has promptly confirmed this opinion. The change came without violence or revolution, but if the retirement of Milan was voluntary so far that the decision originated with him, it was instigated no doubt by the consciousness that since his divorce the sympathy of his subjects had drifted from him and gone out to the mother of his son and successor, whose first royal act, would be to recall her to his side.]

CHAPTER III.

Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria—Princess Clementine of Saxe-Coburg—Prince Alexander of Battenberg—The Battenbergs—Grand Duke of Hesse—Madame de Kolemne—Ary Ecilaw—Prince Nicholas of Montenegro.

TURKEY in Europe, with its semi-barbaric populations, its kindred and yet antagonistic races, its geographical position which makes it a bone of contention for three powerful nations, has withal an homogeneity which will not allow attention to remain concentrated on any one of its provinces alone; they all equally and in turn command the interest of the outer world, whether their name be Roumania or Servia, Bulgaria or Montenegro. The destinies of their rulers, the fate of their governments, is watched with an uneasy sense of insecurity, and therein lies the eternal curiosity which they awaken in whatever conditions they are placed. Ferdinand

of Bulgaria has not caused his predecessor, Alexander of Battenberg, to be forgotten; the halo of romance still attaches to his name, and while his late subjects are fully conscious of the superior strength and firmness of the present Government, backed by the energetic Princess Clementine of Saxe-Coburg, they admit that perhaps the reason of their resentment against the previous *régime* was the absence of a woman at the Battenberg Court.

Sofia, like Belgrade, cannot be called an attractive capital. Dull at all seasons of the year, it becomes unutterably dreary when, as early as November, the ever-deepening snows raise a barrier around the city, isolating it so entirely that for several months it can neither be approached nor left. As soon as the blockade of winter has commenced, the inhabitants are virtually prisoners in their garrison, and the few belated strangers who have lingered too long cannot leave the invested citadel.

Prince Ferdinand is fully aware of these disadvantages, and, seconded by his mother when she is with him, he spares no pains to soften for the foreigner the hardships of his

exile. He has enough charm of manner to succeed with men, and is personally so prepossessing that he wins the unconditional approval of women. He is tall, his features are regular, and before he played a political part his familiar figure at Cannes was universally recognised as belonging to a *parfait gentil-homme*. The only fault of his face in repose is a certain femininity of expression which seems incompatible with the accepted mission of a man whose destiny it is to be the head of a turbulent State, to wear a military uniform, and to take the command of an army. Yet such as he is, there is little doubt that to his outward advantages he owed the favourable impression he created during his excursion into Eastern Roumelia in the beginning of 1888, when he not only excited the enthusiasm of his partisans, but won the respectful sympathy of his political opponents.

Sofia, the reputed hotbed of intrigue and revolution, is practically a spot predestined by nature for repose and Arcadian felicity. Bulgaria is so young a nation that she has much to learn before she can reap the full benefit of

her material resources; but all the elements of prosperity are within her grasp as soon as she knows how to use them. Her soil, like that of Algeria, is so generous that it repays tenfold the slightest attempt to cultivate it, and the country only requires immunity from war to produce without stint and without effort. Prince Ferdinand, having accepted the Bulgarian crown, seriously took to heart Bulgarian interests. He fervently denies that he is under Austrian influence, or inimical to Russia; he indignantly repudiates the imputation that he was the instrument of Prince Zychy, who boasted that he had brought about his election; and he is equally frank in affirming that he has no intention of becoming the serf of the Muscovite.

He admits, half ironically, half sadly, that neither France nor Russia has taken him *au sérieux* as a ruler; he knows that in Paris he was dubbed "le petit Cobourg" and "le petit Saxon," but he does not feel offended. He is philosophically content to let every nation have their say, provided they leave him sufficient time to promote the welfare of Bulgaria by the development of industry and commerce, and to work the invaluable wealth lying dormant

under his feet. In this utilitarian crusade he has to struggle against the deleterious effect of a prolonged Russian interference, which, if not to be libelled by the damning accusation of bribery, has at least had a fatal tendency to corrupt the moral integrity of the population. It is never a thankful task to affranchise a half-civilised community from such dangerous precedents.

The famous falsified letters, attributed to so many different pens, caused Prince Ferdinand much vexation and annoyance. When they were in turn disowned by all the supposed authors, and a suggestion breathed that they might have been written by him, he treated it with infinite scorn, making no mystery of his belief that if strict and honest investigations had been set on foot at Bukarest, the correspondence would have been traced to a certain diplomat residing there, the strongest clue lying in the letters themselves, whose style was the honeyed one so characteristically Russian.

The temporary presence of Princess Clementine in the capital was a boon, not only to her son, but to the society of Sofia; it broke the monotonous routine of a life which could hardly

fail to prove irksome to the once brilliant and popular *habitué* of the Riviera and the courted guest of Parisian drawing-rooms. She has introduced into the palace the feminine element which it sorely lacked, while she has been the backbone of State Councils and the energetic defender of the sovereign's rights. She has, moreover, found favour by openly expressing her wish to see her son married; in furtherance of that desire, she has kept her maternal eyes upon all the available Princesses of Europe, and lately enlisted the good offices of the Duc d'Aumale with regard to an union between Prince Ferdinand and the daughter of the King of the Belgians, or failing this, with a Princess of Flanders, Leopold II.'s niece. For the present, however, the heir presumptive is still Prince Ferdinand of Hohenzollern, who has found it expedient to take up his residence at Jassy, and to court popularity in his future possessions.

The head of the State is engrossed by military subjects; he has long daily conferences with the Minister of War and Major Popoff, the commander of the brigade of Sofia; his favourite, almost his only recreation, is pedestrian exercise.

He takes long country walks with no other escort than Bay Christo, his faithful Telocranitelo, chief of the Macedonian Guard. On Friday, which is the market-day, he rises early and strolls alone among the groups of peasants and country vendors, amused by the picturesque appearance they present in their bright national costumes. The rest of the day he works; he dines at eight with his mother, Countess de Grenaud and her husband, Great Marshal of the Court, a courteous and witty Frenchman, a lady-in-waiting, the Chamberlain and officer on duty, and his secretary. If any guests have been invited, he spends some time with them in conversation after dinner, but usually retires early to his library to write and read far into the night.

Princess Clementine is a clever woman, a good talker, and an omnivorous reader. She seizes with avidity every opportunity which, in snow-girt Sofia, enables her to exchange her views on the topics of the day, or to discuss current events. It is easy to see that she idolises her son, and that her ambition for him is commensurately insatiate. On rare occasions a ball is given at the palace, and incredible

as it may seem, as many as eight hundred invitations are sent out. At such times the sombre and desolate palace is galvanised into brilliancy and movement; it assumes for one night a dazzling air of festivity. A double hedge of the superb Macedonian soldiers lines the broad staircase from the lower to the higher steps, and an orchestra, which the Prince and Princess have been at infinite pains to create, plays the familiar strains of Vienna and Paris. For the nonce, any guest whom chance or duty may have detained at Sofia forgets how many dreary leagues separate him from either of those two capitals.

A full-length portrait of Alexander of Battenberg used to hang above the chair of state now filled by Prince Ferdinand. On his accession it was removed by zealous officials anxious to make a show of loyalty before their new master; but the latter, with characteristic liberality of mind, gave immediate orders that the likeness should be restored to its former position, and at the same time issued his commands to the effect that any other busts or portraits representing the deposed Prince, adorning public streets or monuments, should be

maintained, or reinstated, in case the error of disturbing them had been committed.

Princess Clementine has fully understood and inoculated her son with the conviction that so diminutive a country as Bulgaria must abandon all expectation of successfully resisting any large foreign Power in a conflict against individual or collective political pressure. The part of her ruler is pre-eminently a passive one ; he must concentrate his efforts on creating material welfare, and, to do so successfully, encourage commerce and raise the moral standard of the people. His greatest factor in these laudable endeavours will be the immutability of interior administration and stability in the form of Government.

The consistency of Russia in her foreign policy is a lesson of what the longevity of Cabinets can achieve. From 1814 to 1889 she has had only three Ministers of Foreign Affairs—Nesselrode, Gortchakof, and M. de Giers, who took the portfolio as late as 1889. During this same period of seventy-four years, twenty-four Secretaries of State have succeeded each other at the London Foreign Office, between Lord Castlereagh and Lord Salisbury ; while in Paris,

at the old Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Rue des Capucines, and the newer one of the Quai d'Orsay, fifty-four holders of the office have come and gone between M. de Talleyrand and M. Floquet.*

Happy the countries that have no history ! Happier those who, valuing their preponderance in the destinies of the world, entrust their international policy to the guidance of only a few tried and enlightened statesmen, and do not see it, enfeebled and degenerate, fall into the hands of unscrupulous, unpatriotic, individual ambition !

It might be deemed hyperbolical to say that Prince Ferdinand's predecessor lost his throne because he had no consort with whom to share it ; but there is no doubt that the Bulgarians were sincerely aggrieved, and lamented that Fate had interposed and prevented him from wedding according to the dictates of his heart. Alexander of Battenberg has had his idyllic romance as well as his heroic one. The handsomest living man in Europe was equally fitted to fill his part becomingly in both.

* When this was written the Tirard Ministry had not yet come into power.

Every morning a discreet messenger brought a blushing rose to Charlottenburg ; every evening a petal of the same flower was returned to the donor by the same mysterious emissary. It was the poetical confession of the tender passion burning with equal fervour in the hearts of the young Prince and a fair Princess too closely allied to the old Emperor, placed too near the throne, to hope that consent would be given to what the Court considered as no better than a morganatic marriage. The initiatory chapters of this love story do not date from yesterday. In 1878, under the tall trees of the Imperial Park at Potsdam, an officer of twenty-one was constantly seen riding with a maiden of twelve ; they were the master and the pupil. The young man had the far-off look of those who seek to read the future. The child was not yet pretty, but gave promise of beauty to come. One day the riding lessons ceased ; Prince Alexander of Battenberg had exchanged his title of Colonel of Hessian Dragoons for that of reigning Prince of Bulgaria ; and little Princess Victoria wept, saying she would follow her friend "among the savages." "Only a wife can follow her husband," said the Princess Imperial. "Well, I shall be

the wife of my cousin," stoutly answered the little girl.

When the Prince returned to Berlin, he found his former pupil grown up and much improved ; acquainted with Bulgarian geography as well as himself, the *Skouptchina* had no secrets for her, and love, a man's strong love, took the place of the half-playful affection he had hitherto entertained for his companion. The termination of his reign, or rather of his seven years' struggle, is but another chapter of his romance. His useless submission to the will of the Czar, his humble responses to the stern despatches of the Emperor, his final abdication following on the triumph of his return and the loud ovations of the people ; his sword sheathed when the army offered to close their ranks and defend their Prince—all this mournful epopy would remain inexplicable had the brave, valiant young man not been hopelessly in love. He thought, perhaps, that happiness weighed more than a crown, and that, wedded to a Hohenzollern, son-in-law of an Emperor, he would reappear some day with greater chances of lasting tenure in the palace which he had left like a servant who is dismissed when he no longer pleases his master.

However, the rapid march of events for a while turned the scale in favour of the lovers, and their cause was in the hands of powerful allies. The triple alliance of the three Victorias would have been almost invincible, even confronted with the omnipotent force of one whose opposition has never been gainsaid, and who might have proved more powerful in affairs of State than in affairs of the heart. Bismarck has an exaggerated conception of the dignity of the Imperial family, and tolerates no alliances which he does not judge equal to their rank; moreover, he shares the opinion of the great King who had so often excited the tender passion without reciprocating it, when he said: "The constitution of all countries should contain an article by which Princes who are in love are condemned to incarceration in lunatic asylums." However, once more Bismarck's unvarying luck has made circumstances work for him. Prince Alexander himself cut the gordian knot by his unexpected marriage with Fräulein Leisinger, leaving his allies discomfited, the trust reposed in him betrayed, and allowing his romance to end like his sovereignty in defection.

The Battenbergs, for whom the Queen of Great Britain professes so demonstrative a

liking, are not very popular in Germany. Their antecedents are compressed in a few words. In 1851, Prince Alexander of Hesse, uncle of the reigning Grand Duke, married the Countess of Bossak-Hancke, whose father was a Woïvode of Poland, and created her Princess of Battenberg. The *Almanac of Gotha* respectfully places this couple in the category of sovereign families, but the *Genealogical Annuary* of crowned heads unceremoniously relegates the marriage among the morganatic alliances, and this decision is universally adopted. The fortunes of the Battenbergs rose rapidly, and they owe their elevation chiefly to the protection of Queen Victoria, who confounds in her sympathies the two branches of the House of Hesse. Princess Alice was given to the Grand Duke Louis IV.; she favoured the marriage of one of his daughters with the eldest Battenberg, and, on realising the impossibility of putting into execution certain plans she had formed with regard to Princess Beatrice, she married her to the younger brother. Prince Henry found among his wedding gifts the title of Royal Highness and the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the British army. The same partiality was brought

to bear upon the loves of Prince Alexander, ex-ruler of Bulgaria, and Princess Victoria, the second daughter of the Empress Frederick. Its happy ending would have for ever wiped out the memory of past humiliations, and with the realisation of his love-dream, Prince Battenberg's political career been for ever closed. The only real obstacle was not, as has been alleged, the will of the Czar, but Bismarck's. Alexander had once treated Count Herbert with ill-concealed contempt, and the Chancellor and his sons are not of a race which readily forgets.

The Prince closely resembles his beautiful mother; he is nearly six feet in height, and although he had served in the Prussian army, and is of German origin, he has none of the stiffness and rigidity supposed to be the invariable attributes of the Imperial soldiers. His face, of a pure oval, denotes strength of purpose; his lips part frequently in a sweet but slightly ironical smile; his deep-blue, large, and well-opened eyes have a caressing glance which appeals to women, but when he gives an order or resents interference a light flashes from them like a glimmer of steel, and the inner nature of the man stands revealed.

From early childhood Alexander was ambitious. At an age when boys play, he dreamed of great deeds to be accomplished, of inscribing his name on the pages of history, and of lifting himself above his compeers. A mute, inglorious life appeared to him insupportable; perils and adventures seemed a hundred times preferable to the princely comforts in which he was lapped. As he grew older every vestige of the exclusivism or bigotry, which results from the narrow circle in which princes are reared, disappeared; he had travelled enough to be free from prejudice. "Paris," he used to say, "has extraordinary and unrivalled fascinations, the stranger who has once breathed its intoxicating atmosphere can never forget it. I was there but twice, and each time only for a brief stay, but I have experienced to the full the truth of this appreciation. Every man born into the world has two fatherlands—his own country and Paris."

The antagonism existing between Prince Alexander and the Czar is not of modern growth, or the result of recent incidents. It dates back to the time when they were both

children. They used to meet every year at Darmstadt, the Empress Marie being in the habit of annually visiting the home of her girlhood, and of spending a few weeks with her brother, the former Grand Duke Louis III., and Alexander of Hesse. The Emperor was so fond of both these relatives by marriage, that, in order to see them more frequently, he had made the Castle of Jügendheim his habitual summer residence, and never failed to summon thither the little Battenberg boys, his nephews. Alexander was so especially his favourite that the jealousy of the Czar's sons was roused by a predilection too openly expressed. Thus were laid the first seeds of an enmity, which has, however, been unfairly exaggerated by party politics. One day at Jügendheim, young Battenberg, seated on the Emperor's knee, was playing with the orders on his breast. He suddenly asked the name of one particular star.

"It is the Cross of St. George," answered Alexander II.; "one which you will wear some day on your uniform when you are a Russian general, and have won your first victory."

The Czarevitch, who was present, turned away

angrily muttering between his teeth, but loud enough to be heard :

“ Oh, of course ; all good things are to be for the Germans, now ! ”

“ Are you not a German yourself, Imperial Highness ? ” retorted the undaunted little fellow. “ German blood flows in your veins, you know. ”

The Czarevitch never forgot or wholly forgave this imprudent speech, coming from a petted child whom he affected to consider as an inferior sort of poor relation.

Alexander of Battenberg, whatever may have been the *mésalliances* which have exposed his family to blame and contumely, belongs to a race which has been ever noteworthy for a bold and adventurous spirit. A brother of his mother distinguished himself in 1870 under the orders of Garibaldi, and later on commanded for a short time a brigade at Dijon. He himself served in the Prussian Guard, and, even in a corps where splendid physiques and daring bravery were by no means uncommon qualities, he was equally remarkable for both. He was only twenty when he made his first campaign in 1877 during the Turco-Russian war, and he

tested his diplomatic weapons against the advisers placed by the Czar at his side as soon as he found himself established in Sofia. He resisted all attempts at open or covert Russification, rebelling against the part which would make him the obedient vassal or complacent tool of his powerful neighbours. His new subjects at no time gave him full confidence and unconditional surrender; they always regarded his sovereignty with jealous distrust.

The Bulgarians are peasants at heart, with all the stolid thrift and suspicious caution of the genuine tillers of the soil. The uniformity of type which is so striking a characteristic throughout the whole province, while it indicates a great purity of race, accounts for the exclusiveness and conservatism which physiologists tell us goes with it. The Bulgarians have not adopted the Turkish fez; they wear the national *cabara* or round sheepskin cap; their costume consists of the shirt with long loose sleeves richly embroidered in bright colours, and the wide Mussulman trousers confined below the knee and gathered at the waist into a richly decorated belt. They love their country with

a dogged, narrow, but sincere patriotism ; and their love is justified, for the land spreads under their feet like a rich and fertile garden, the delight of the botanist and the poet with its wealth of fruit and flowers. But in their half-savage breasts no feeling of loyalty to their European rulers has yet taken a firm hold ; they do not understand the blind devotion which casts the destinies of a whole nation with that of the man placed at its head ; and their lawless indifference is at once the greatest obstacle and the greatest peril in the path of the sovereigns that succeed each other on the thrones of the Danubian Principalities.

The Grand Ducal family of Hesse has had the privilege, in this prosaic and practical age, of astonishing Europe by singular and mysterious episodes, strongly flavoured with romance. When in 1878 Louis IV. became for the second time a widower by the death of the lamented Princess Alice of Great Britain, Queen Victoria would gladly have testified to her affection for her son-in-law by giving him another daughter in marriage ; but the House of Lords stubbornly refused to abrogate the law which forbids unions with a deceased wife's sister, a barrier which

it is said the Grand Duke was not very anxious to see levelled, as he was at the time swayed by a secret passion for a clever, brilliant, and rather pretty woman who, by her wit and unconventionality, was creating a sensation in the intensely respectable little world of Darmstadt. Madame de Kolemene was the wife of a Russian diplomat, who disregarded the etiquette of her position so far that she was frequently seen sitting after the play at the small table of some well-lit café, laughing and chatting with young men and students. The attentions of the Grand Duke to this lady had become so pronounced, and her conduct so unguarded, that her husband sought and readily obtained a divorce. As soon as Madame de Kolemene was free, the anxiety of the reigning families closely connected with the House of Hesse entered an acute stage. They trembled at the thought that Louis IV. should be hurried into a rash and ever-to-be-regretted step. It was then that an incident took place, so unexpected and inexplicable, that to this day it has remained an unsolved problem. Conjectures, founded on probabilities, can alone throw any light on a subject which has excited as much blame as surprise.

On the very day, (the 30th of April, 1884,) when his palace was filled with exalted guests bidden to the marriage of his daughter Victoria with Prince Louis of Battenberg, the Grand Duke was married in his private chapel to Alexandrine Czapska, the divorced wife of M. de Kolemene. The most insane infatuation could not excuse a proceeding outraging all the traditions of courtesy, paternity, and opportunity. That this extraordinary measure should have been taken or conceived without a high connivance, appeared so incredible to those best acquainted with the intrigues of Court and the machiavelism of female diplomacy, that they did not scruple to hint that the Grand Duke had acted, not so much in obedience to the claims of his bride as under pressure of a more imperative and astute lady. The breathless succession of events gave plausibility to that opinion. Twenty-four hours after the marriage, hastily blessed at midnight, the morganatic wife had left the palace almost a prisoner and been conveyed beyond the frontier. Was she an accomplice or the victim of a deeply laid plot of which the irresponsible *raison d'état* was the instigator? Had the Queen herself feigned to shut her eyes to what was going on

within a hundred yards of her? Had she precipitated the catastrophe and reserved the explosion of her wrath till it was too late to prevent it? Had she, with her knowledge of human nature and profound experience, calculated that it would be an easier task to prevail upon a weak man to cut the gordian knot of an imprudent marriage by threatening him with the direst consequences, than to withdraw him from the fascinations of a siren infinitely more dangerous as a favourite *en titre* than as a repudiated wife whom he could never recall? If such had been Her Majesty's intentions she fulfilled them to the letter, and never has more complete success attended so hazardous a venture. However this may have been, a trustworthy witness has related the events of the night of that fateful 30th of April as follows, and supplemented them with other previous incidents:

Late in the evening of the 29th the Grand Marshal of the Court, aware of the decisive act which his master was contemplating, considered it his duty to inform the Prince Imperial of Germany, who had come to Darmstadt to assist at Princess Victoria's wedding. In a transport

of indignation Frederick William declared that he would not remain another moment in the palace, gave orders for his immediate departure, and sent the Grand Marshal to Queen Victoria demanding an interview. (This functionary lost his position for his conscientious interference.)

While his trunks were being packed the Crown Prince repaired to the apartments of his mother-in-law, where he found the poor little bride elect on her knees, sobbing piteously, and imploring her grandmother to persuade Frederick William to remain at least till after the ceremony. By this time the news had spread, not only in the palace, but in the city; and Darmstadt, in the midst of its festive preparations, was convulsed with excitement and curiosity.

The interview between the Queen and Prince Imperial was a stormy one; both interlocutors, forgetting all reserve in their exasperation, allowed themselves to formulate invectives and to use language of unprecedented violence. Princess Victoria fainted away, and had to be carried to her room and laid on her bed, where she recovered consciousness only to spend the night in a succession of attacks of cramp and

pain. While the doctor was attending her, her father's marriage was hurriedly solemnised, with only the necessary number of witnesses ; Madame de Kolemene had insisted on no further delay, as the 30th of April is the last day for some weeks to come on which Russian marriages can be legally blessed. The Prince Imperial had been prevailed upon to stay for the other wedding, which took place in the morning with the usual pomp, sadly dimmed by the shadows of the untoward circumstances which had preceded it. The young Princess, deadly pale in her bridal attire, literally staggered to the altar, where she stood dazed and trembling, having been plied with over-doses of brandy by her physician, whose sole preoccupation was to enable her to stand the strain of the public ceremony. A few hours afterwards all the guests had departed.

Madame de Kolemene was already gone. She never saw the Grand Duke again, after he left her in the chapel to obey an imperative summons of the Queen. She went to Kösen, in Thuringia, where she remained till all the formalities of her second divorce were over. She received an annuity of a thousand pounds and the title of

Countess of Romrode, a meagre sequel to her momentary elevation. There is no doubt, however, that the younger daughters of the Grand Duke had been on a footing of great intimacy with her; an intimacy which cost one of their chamberlains an instant dismissal, when he ventured to remonstrate on the plea that it was not an advantageous one for the young Princesses. A lady whose house was opposite the palace, and close to Madame de Kolemne's, relates that this lady's little son used to come to her daily and beg to be allowed to play in her garden, "because the Grand Duke is with mamma, and papa is out riding."

When, three years ago, an anonymous writer, under the *nom de plume* of Ary Ecilaw, wrote "Le Roi de Thessalie," the faint disguise of the characters, the obvious transparency of their names, the graphic descriptions of men and places connected the story with the drama enacted at Darmstadt, and the semi-mystery was more compromising than a bare statement would have been. The unsparing raillery aimed at the Queen, the bitter denunciations hurled against the weak and treacherous Grand Duke,

the halo of persecuted innocence and unmerited martyrdom placed on the brow of *Madame de Mineleko*, the heroine of the book, sufficiently indicated that Madame de Kolemene, in her forced retirement of Kösen, had lent notes and documents for this apology and this defence. But who was Ary Ecilaw, the real living Ary Ecilaw? the author who has so successfully preserved her incognito, who has betrayed the same intimate knowledge of German and Russian Courts in other stories: "*Une Altesse Impériale*" and "*Roland*"? A woman, undoubtedly, one who has made herself the advocate and judge of great personal wrongs, who is unsparing in her revenge, undaunted in her course. Society was at once charmed, moved, and alarmed. Some of the darts struck home, others excited anger, all caused apprehension of further revelations. Curiosity and the interest of self-preservation stimulated the desire to unveil the sphinx. Some said that the writer was Princess Karolath, the heroine of that other tragic love affair which ended in despair for the woman, because after her useless divorce she could not get from the man she so blindly worshipped the only repara-

tion in his power to give. He could not at the last shake the determination of Prince Bismarck, who swore that no son of his should ever bestow his spotless name on a *divorcée*. But Princess Karolath was not a woman to exhale her grief in print, and to make the world a party to her sorrows. Then the fathership of "Roland" was attributed to Princess Guillaume Radzivill, a clever, intelligent young woman, niece of Balzac on her mother's side; but she indignantly repudiated the charge, and the mortification it caused her made her seriously ill. She had written novels, it is true, signed "Une Grande Dame Russe," but they were of a different order.

Having exhausted every conjecture, those whose vocation it is to ignore nothing began to whisper that they had discovered the true name of Ary Ecilaw. With bated breath they affirmed that she was no other than Princess Irene, the third daughter of the Grand Duke of Hesse, who had with the fervour of youthful friendship espoused the cause of Madame de Kolemene in "Le Roi de Thessalie," and who in the same spirit showed her hatred of the

Grand Duke Sergius, the husband of her sister, Princess Elizabeth, when she wrote "*Une Altesse Impériale*." Justified or not, the rumour has gained ground, perhaps because in the short introduction to the last-named novel Ary Ecilaw says : "The most unlikely scenes I have retraced are, I do not hesitate to affirm it, those depicted with the most rigorous exactitude and the strictest truth."

What lends plausibility to the report is that none but one admitted into the innermost arcana of the jealously guarded Royal households could have shown such accuracy of detail, so much insight and penetration into the tortuous ways of Courts ; and this pleads in favour of the suggested authorship against the improbability of a young girl setting herself with such rigid and unsparing hostility against her family and relations. Whoever Ary Ecilaw is, she writes well, fluently, naturally, with here and there an eccentricity or negligence of style which reveals that French is not her mother tongue ; she traces her characters and develops her scenes with the feverish haste of outraged sensitiveness and the unconscious vindictiveness

which, as much as blind partiality, too often guides the pen of women when they take the public into the confidence of a long-suppressed pain or hidden grievance.

Ary Ecilaw's last book has strayed a little from her former field. "*Mael Comtesse d'Arcq*" is the idealised narrative of an incident which at one time created great excitement in Parisian society. It is a strong pathetic story, and would but lose by being ruthlessly brought down to the banality of absolute reality; it marks also a new era in the literary work of the author, or the withdrawal of some *collaborateur* whose part is played out. Her next venture is *L'Officier Bleu*, a play put into rehearsal at the beginning of the present year in Paris, and stopped by the censors on the eve of the first representation, to the dismay of M. Koning, the manager of the Gymnase.

Smaller than its neighbours, lying, as it were, in their embrace, bathing its sea-frontier in the waves of the Adriatic, Montenegro has, like the sister principalities, its Court and its ruler. The "Black Mountain," called by the

Turks *Karadagh*, has a capital which contains a handful of houses, one thousand citizens, and a Royal residence. Some hours of rough riding over the narrow roads cut on the flanks of steep mountains bring the adventurous traveller in sight of Cettinje, which he perceives from afar, breaking the even monotony of a broad plain. Those thatched dwellings constitute the only town of a province which, diminutive as it is, has kept Turkey at bay for centuries, and more than once disturbed the equanimity of the Ottoman Empire.

Prince Nicholas, who before he was twenty years old succeeded his uncle Prince Danilo in 1860, was educated in Paris, at the College Louis-le-Grand, and has not forgotten his fondness for France and his proficiency in the language of his school-days, which he even now speaks habitually with his younger children. The old scholars of Louis-le-Grand, who are now men of forty, have not forgotten the first appearance of the "Labadens" Petrovitch in the playground of the Lyceum in 1858, and the electrifying effect, in the midst of their dingy regulation uniform, of the dazzling Eastern

costume, the ample trousers, the embroidered vest, and the jewelled belt from which the *cangiar* had been prudently removed by the masters. The young Prince did not speak a word of any European language, save a bastard Italian; but he soon learnt to make himself understood, and became very popular with his comrades for his geniality, and also slightly feared, perhaps, on account of the bellicose expression of his large black eyes and the vigour of his athletic frame. He was not quarrelsome, and never fought, although he deeply enjoyed seeing two boys engaged in single combat. One day, in a hand-to-hand struggle one of his comrades, who had thrown down his adversary, triumphantly placed his knee on the prostrate form, rose, and prepared to depart.

“Why did you not pummel his face,” said Petrovitch, in his mellifluous voice, “when you were on the top of him?”

“Because one does not strike a fallen foe,” answered the boy.

“True,” reflectively replied the Montenegrin.
“And besides, he is not a Turk.”

A few months after his accession to the

throne he married Milena Nicolawa, the daughter of the Voyevode, General-in-Chief Viscotitch. Even at forty the features of the Princess have retained their purity of outline, and her large, dreamy, velvety eyes have a peculiar, pleasing softness; she is diffident and almost shy, has travelled little, never felt any ambition to emulate the Queens her neighbours, and has given herself up entirely to the education of her ten children. The eldest daughter, Zorka, brought up at St. Petersburg, married the son of the late Prince of Servia; the heir is a bright, intelligent boy of seventeen, and the youngest boy bears the title Great Voyevode of Grubovatz and Zeta, a ponderous one for a child of ten. Their father has lately written a drama, which was acted under the title of *The Czarina of the Balkans*.

The Prince has philosophically accepted his transmutation from the liveliest of modern capitals to the scenes of his isolated grandeur, and stoically accepted the drawbacks of his position. Looking out from his window on the city, which he knows to be the most civilised portion of his dominions, he sees two streets forming a

cross; the longest leads to a one-storeyed inn or *locanda*, beyond which the town ceases to exist. Even an elevation of one floor is a rare architectural feature at Cettinje. The ordinary dwelling consists of a single apartment, combining parlour, bedroom, kitchen, and stable; the walls are of rough stones kept in place by moistened earth; cement and plaster are unknown quantities. Frequently the door and window are one; two apertures for exit and ventilation are deemed a superfluous luxury. There are no monuments, no squares, no public edifices, unless the Tower of Skulls is considered as one. It is erected on the summit of a low eminence, where the heads of the Turks killed in battle used to be exposed, and has for the inhabitants a patriotic interest.

The other buildings worthy of the name, and ranking above mere hovels, are a monastery, backed by a mountain, where the bishop, the spiritual head of the principality, resides; and the ruins of the Bigliardo, once the palace of the Princess, now used as a workshop and printing office. It derived its singular name from a billiard table sent as a present to Prince Danilo,

the former sovereign, the advent of which created so great an impression that for a time it was the sole topic of conversation, and was received with a national welcome. Fifty men were engaged for several weeks in bringing it to its final destination.

However, when Prince Nicholas turns from the contemplation of this melancholy picture he can derive some comfort from his own immediate surroundings. Not that his palace, in its outward aspect, can be ranked much above a middle-class suburban residence elsewhere, being only three hundred yards long and one hundred yards deep, and surrounded by walls; but because the interior so far exceeds any expectations which the general aspect of Montenegrin habits leads one to entertain. A presiding genius has wrought marvels; refined taste has successfully struggled with poverty-stricken barbarism. The hall is hung with weapons and panoplies; the broad, low staircase leads to a spacious apartment, superbly decorated with alternate panels of Gobelin tapestry and brilliant Eastern fabrics. There, are suspended the full-length portraits of Danilo and his widow,

Princess Darintra ; of the Czar Alexander II. ; of the Emperor and Empress of Austria ; of Mirteo Petrovitch, the Montenegrin hero, father of the present Prince, and many other pictures of national interest, most of them painted by Cormak, the excellent Tcheck artist, whom we know by his scenes of Montenegrin life. Some of the furniture has a great intrinsic value ; precious china and bronzes have been offered at different times by wealthy Russian magnates, admirers of the brave little nation. In one corner stands a gigantic *somovar* (tea urn) of massive silver, presented by the Slav Committee to the Prince after his journey to Moscow in 1860. Yet, in spite of the evidences of wealth, of the painstaking efforts, the traces of which are too visible, there is throughout the incongruous mansion an absence of those minute details of elegance and comfort which are never missed in the homes of a more perfected civilisation, and which, did they exist, would perhaps only bring into stronger relief, as does the courteous hospitality of the Prince, the undisguisable meanness and squalor of the capital.

Nicholas Petrovitch Niegoch is now a man

of forty-seven, inclined to stoutness, with an easy frank manner, a sympathetic voice, thick black hair, bright, eager eyes, and full whiskers and long moustache, similar in cut to those of the Emperor Alexander II. His physical strength is prodigious, and he excels in every kind of sport and exercise. He invariably appears in the national costume, a tunic of white wool with tight sleeves, opening in front over a red vest, and loose, wide blue trousers ; on his head the *kapa*, a red cap bordered with black silk. All Montenegrins wear the same dress, the richness and abundance of embroidery alone indicating their social position.

The life of the ruler of the Black Mountain, if not as strictly controlled by etiquette as that of other monarchs, is perhaps even more regular and monotonous. He rises late, adjourns to the Senate, where he either works in a private room or takes part in the deliberations of the Supreme Tribunal ; then, followed by his suite, he walks abroad in his poor little capital, listening to all who wish to approach him, a diurnal Haroun al Raschid ; or seated on the stone edge of the well at the cross streets and surrounded by a

wide and admiring circle—a modern St. Louis without the legendary oak-tree—he receives petitions and tenders advice. After the mid-day meal, taken with his family, and the siesta which lasts till three, the Prince rides out on the flat plain beyond Cettinje, either alone or accompanied by a senator. At dusk he again leaves the palace and saunters through the town, which at that hour enjoys a transient animation.

At long intervals a dinner, given in honour of some distinguished foreigner or national festival, breaks the forlorn routine of the Court. In spite of a fabulous number of courses—comfits and sweets alternately preceding and following meats—the banquet is always hurried over. The Prince frequently touches none of the dainties served to him, but calls for a slice of *castradena*, or smoked goat's flesh, a national dish he prefers to all others. When the official guests have retired, Prince Nicholas and his own familiars speed to a large room on the ground floor, sacred to billiards and cards. Like all his countrymen, he is passionately fond of play in every shape and form, and although he has no conjugal mishaps to forget, he gambles till the

small hours of the morning with the head of the political department, Antro Radowich, his cousin, and another cousin, Bojo Petrovitch, the Minister of War, a man much esteemed in the principality for his reputation of courage and capacity.

The population of Cetinje, in spite of its apparent contempt for the amenities of life, hails with unsophisticated delight any occasion justifying public rejoicings, such as an official birth or wedding, or a patron saint's day. The bell of the Tower of Skulls peals, echoed by that of the monastery, fireworks explode, artillery thunders, a fusillade of guns is kept up, and the revels last from dawn till night.

When the heir was born, after being preceded into the world successively by three sisters, the first cannon was fired from the balcony of the palace. Girls are supposed in Montenegro to be sent by the devil, boys by God. The former are a disgrace, a humiliating penalty, the latter a blessing and an honourable reward. If a father is congratulated on the advent of his female offspring, he is grievously offended, and remarks deprecatingly: "You are

mistaken, it is a girl." Prince Nicholas was enough of his country not to be entirely free from this prejudice, so he celebrated the birth of his first son with rejoicings and festivities planned on an unprecedented scale. A gratuitous distribution of *raki* took place in the centre of the town, and over and above the ordinary civil and military boom of celebration, a regimental band played the Montenegrin and Russian hymns throughout the whole day without interruption, and with such vigour and discord that it was finally suppressed the following week, although it had cost infinite trouble to organise, and had only been in existence three years. The Czarevitch, now Alexander III., was godfather to the infant heir, and was represented at Cetinje by a high Russian official, Count Cheremetieff. The godmother was the Grand Duchess Marie, Duchess of Edinburgh. The orthodox baptism ordains that the child shall be entirely immersed in the font, hence a foreigner's remark that a Christian Montenegrin does not die without having taken *one* bath.

On that memorable occasion Cetinje showed what it could do under extraordinary pressure.

It stands on record that as many as *thirty-five* guests actually sat down at the sumptuous breakfast prepared for them at the palace; they did not disguise their astonishment at the splendour of their reception in a locality which they had at first sight judged to be barely removed from complete barbarism. Cooks had been sent for from Naples, and most of the viands came from Trieste and Vienna. Of the wines, it need only be said that they flowed in such abundance that several of the gentle local dignitaries slipped quietly under the table, overcome by their excellence.

The presiding genius of Cettinje is *not* a woman, it is true, but in a comprehensive glance at European Turkey it would be impossible to overlook the smallest, quaintest, least affected by Western civilisation of those singularly picturesque principalities, countries without an artistic past or modern progress, and yet intrinsically interesting to the traveller because, although geographically belonging to the European continent, they are more closely kin in their manners, dress, and convictions to the Eastern and Asiatic races.

CHAPTER IV.

Czar and Czarina—The Czarevitch—Gatchina—The Ural—
Prince of Mingrelia.

To occupy the proudest throne in Europe ; to be the idolised wife of an Emperor, the beloved sovereign of one hundred and twenty million subjects ; to keep pure and warm in the midst of official pomp the old family ties ; to have beauty, intelligence, a joyous disposition and a perfect constitution, is surely a lot which all women must envy. To spend each hour in mortal dread of a catastrophe ; to imagine the assassin's knife or the murderer's bullet lurking in every shadow ; to wonder by day and by night whether dynamite is not hidden under the chair one draws to the fire, in the silken hangings of the bed on which one lies down to rest, in the cushions of the railway-carriage which conveys you from one

palace to another ; to hold existence on so frail a tenure that not even in the most sanguine moments it is possible to call the morrow one's own ; to have each personal fear a thousand times intensified in the person of husband and son, is a life which the poorest wretch working out his doom in the mines of Siberia would not exchange for his, and the contemplation of which makes the stoutest heart quail. One woman has been blessed with all the gifts, stricken with all the curses, she has drank her fill of the enchanted cup and not been spared one taste of the poisonous dregs. That woman is Marie Feodorovna, Empress of all the Russias.

The fourth child of Christian IX. and Queen Louise of Denmark relinquished on her marriage day—according to established custom—her own poetical, euphonious, half Norse name of Dagmar, so felicitously appropriate to the bright lissom girl over whose cradle the strong saline breezes of northern seas had blown. Before the expected shocks to her nervous system caused by the alarming scenes she has witnessed, the Danish Princess was as active and hardy in body as she is quick and alert in mind. She ignored fatigue

and smiled at danger ; her indomitable energy belied the apparent delicacy of her lithe and lissom form and slender figure. Like a true daughter of the land of the Walkyries, she is passionately fond of dancing, and dances admirably and indefatigably with exquisite poetry of motion ; not even when she had spent a whole night at a ball did she rise an hour later. While fashionable women are still in bed, she had heard Mass and breakfasted. She despises the loose *négligés* and floating morning robes, and is always seen before noon in tightly fitting tailor-made gowns, with neat linen collars and cuffs. She wears her hair slightly curled on the forehead, but smooth and glossy in its coils ; her "get up" is always irreproachable, and the Emperor, who surveys her *toilettes* with admiring pride, declares "that there is no woman in the world as well groomed as his wife." Her deep violet eyes smile and darken under their lashes when she is pleased, and her irregular features crowned with golden brown tresses have a charm not often rivalled by classical beauty, while even under her jewelled crown and heavy mantle of state she is bewitchingly feminine. To the Em-

peror she is always "Minna," a pet name he gave her during his courtship, the caressing diminutive of Mignon.

The Czarina laughs in the midst of her grandeur when she looks back upon the days of her childhood, their simplicity, and even privations. She remembers how her father—then only Prince Christian of Denmark—found it so hard to rear his five children; how he lived in a flat on the fourth floor of a corner house at Copenhagen, never dreaming of a time when he would be a king, or that his eldest son would become King of Greece, his daughters respectively the future sovereigns of Great Britain and Russia, Princess Thyra Duchess of Cumberland, and Prince Waldemar the happy husband of the Duc de Chartres' daughter.

The three sisters had but one bedroom between them; the furniture was plain and scanty; the beds were narrow and hard. To replace the absent wardrobe, a curtain drawn on a rod against the wall concealed the pegs on which the dresses hung. A common deal table, covered with a thin cloth, occupied the centre of the apartment, and was used by the Princesses

in turn for lessons, work, and play. Before their marriage they had never worn silk gowns; and Dagmar once implored her friend the Countess Daneskiold, with tears in her eyes, to lend her a lace-trimmed handkerchief to take to a party, as she did not own any that were not more for use than ornament. Withal the girls were merry, cheerful, and happy, taking their simple pleasures with innocent lightheartedness, very united among themselves, and honestly fond of their governess, an amiable and accomplished Belgian lady, Mademoiselle de l'Escaille, who sometimes objected to their romps, and unceremoniously ordered Prince Waldemar out of the room when he became too obstreperous.

Alexandra was the fairest of the sisters, although her beauty was tardy of development; Dagmar the cleverest, and Thyra the most warm-hearted. At the time of the engagement and marriage of the Princess of Wales, her youngest sister was a mere child; she happened to be thrown much together with Prince Arthur, who evinced a boyish fondness for the bright, plain little girl, and in childish fashion they called each other husband and wife. But when the

Duke of Connaught, arrived at man's estate, bethought himself of these early promises, and went to Copenhagen with a vague intention of obtaining their realisation, he found Princess Thyra much improved it is true, but having utterly altered her mind respecting her former playfellow. She informed her mother that she would have nothing to say to him, and that he was to be told so very decisively. When the Duke of Cumberland in his turn presented himself as a suitor, the wilful little maiden did not receive his advances any better. Three times he proposed to her, and three times she rejected him; her principal objection being that there was something in the shape of his nose which repelled her. To the excessive surprise of her family, not very long after this third rejection, during a summer stay at Rumpenheim, near Frankfort-on-the-Main, Princess Thyra suddenly announced her readiness to marry the Duke. On being questioned upon the reasons which had caused her to alter her mind so radically, she confessed that her suitor had come to her once again; that so much fidelity, humility, and perseverance had touched her heart; and that

she now felt certain that so true a lover must make a good husband.

Princess Dagmar had her girlish romance before she became the wife of Alexander III. She was engaged to his elder brother, the Czarevitch, a tall handsome man, with fine, clear-cut features, closely resembling his beautiful mother, and she loved him with all the fervour of a young ardent heart. In 1865, at Nice, the Grand Duke Nicholas fell from his horse and was so fatally injured that his life was despaired of. His *fiancée* hastened to him, and never left his side till he breathed his last. The succession to the throne devolved on the Grand Duke Alexander. No two brothers could be more unlike; the younger was plainer, brusquer, less gentle and polished; he embodied the more salient characteristics of the Russian race, he loved his country with his whole soul and every manly instinct, expecting to serve her always as a son, not to govern her one day as a master. He stood by the deathbed of the Czarevitch, who, in presence of the Emperor and Empress, placed the hand of the weeping Dagmar into his, saying to her with almost his last words :

"Marry my brother; he is true as crystal, and I wish it."

Enforced by political reasons, this bequest was law to the bereaved girl, who, if left to her own inspiration, would have willingly mourned her lover all her life as if she had been indeed his widow. To obey him, she roused herself from her abandonment of woe, and gave a sad, reluctant consent to the proposed union. On the other hand, the Grand Duke Alexander, not contemplating the possibility of ever being called to the throne, and considering himself at liberty to marry according to his inclination, had fallen in love with a maid of honour of the Empress, Princess Marie Metchersky, the only daughter of a Polish nobleman, who was also a poet and an exile. From the moment he became Czarevitch, he understood that the alliance he was looking forward to was henceforth impossible; the young girl could not gainsay the bitter reality, and they parted with reciprocal esteem, cancelling their vows and their love. Eventually, the Princess Marie married Prince Paul Demidoff, was fairly happy, and died at the early age of twenty-four.

Alexander and Dagmar, both with wounded affections and a preoccupied heart, both cursing their rank, which forced them to be unfaithful to their promises and their regrets, found themselves face to face as future man and wife. They did not attempt to hide their grief from each other; they exchanged lugubrious confidences, and bewailed the fate that compelled a reluctant submission to its decrees; but before the poor young people were aware of it, comfort came to them. While mingling their tears and reciprocally reading their hearts, they learnt to appreciate the loyalty and nobility of their natures, and one day, eighteen months after the death of Prince Nicholas, the two *inconsolables* awoke with glad surprise to the consciousness that the hated *mariage de convenance* would in reality be a love match. Their union has been an exceptionally happy one; after twenty years of wedded life and the birth of five children, Alexander III. and Marie Feodorovna are lovers still.

Many and touching are the incidents related of their early married life, from the moment when the Czarevitch welcomed the Danish Princess to St. Petersburg, and with tender

solicitude watched over the shy young girl during the trying ordeal of the official presentation, and the stately ceremonial of her wedding day. The oppressive formality, the long functions, frightened and confused her; she felt faint and ill. According to the etiquette of the Russian Court, on the night of her marriage, the Czarevitch's bride is left alone in her great bed of state, to await the visit of the Emperor and Empress, who bring their blessing to their son's wife. The little bride lay trembling and pale, and could hardly maintain her composure while they remained in the room. The night was bitterly cold; the laces and satin coverlets of the Royal couch gave no warmth. The apartment used on these occasions only was one of a suite of gorgeous but uninhabited chambers; the ladies-in-waiting and attendants had long since withdrawn to another wing; a few gigantic guards were the only human beings within hail. The Grand Duke, when he entered, found the Princess miserably ill, writhing with pain, and crying bitterly. With womanly tenderness he soothed and comforted her, fetched his long fur-lined mantle, which he threw over the bed, and

wandered through the dim and deserted corridors in quest of simple remedies and restoratives which would have been at hand in the poorest cottage. He bent over her, watching the effect of his unskilled nursing, till at daybreak she closed her eyes, her hand clasped in his, and slept. The isolation and loneliness of the great of the earth, at times when sympathy and motherly care are most needed, the chill impenetrability of the barriers of etiquette, the irresponsive tyranny of ceremonial that no human weakness can touch or natural yearnings break down, are the dark, seamy side of the brilliant life which dazzles the multitude, which sees only its pomp and glitter.

When the young bride became Empress, and was admitted into her husband's council, as she had long been into his unreserved confidence, she determined to put down much of the waste and extravagance, not to say dishonesty, reigning in every department of the Imperial household. She did this without arrogance or meanness, firmly and gently, like one who intends to be obeyed. She swept away the most glaring abuses; and it is to the credit of so young a

woman that she accomplished her aim without abating any of the splendour and state of her Court, without imperilling its reputation of magnificent hospitality, and, greater triumph still, without incurring the censure that so often attends the efforts of reformers.

At the present time the *personnel* of the Russian Court consists of 680 gentlemen, including Marshals, Masters of Ceremony, Chamberlains, Equerries, physicians, doctors, dentists, etc., and 209 ladies of different rank. Some of these functionaries of both sexes are titular, others honorary.

The happiest moments of the Czarina's life are those she spends with her parents at Copenhagen. There, in the midst of old associations, she resumes the domestic life of her girlhood with her brothers and sisters, who come flocking to the family rendezvous. She and the Princess of Wales are girls together once more in that simple patriarchal interior; they never fail each year to bring their mother, for her inspection, all the jewels and ornaments they have lately received; they prize highly the absolute freedom of the Danish palace, the immunity from care,

and the comparative plainness of their surroundings, lifted, however, far above the hampering penury of the early days.

The Czar delights no less than the Czarina in these periodical visits. He breathes more freely at Fredensborg, the summer residence of King Christian, situated about twenty miles from Copenhagen ; and with his departure from Russia is laid that haunting spectre of Nihilism which, waking or sleeping, he ever feels at his side. It matters little to him that his father-in-law's palace is so crowded by relatives that only five or six rooms can be apportioned to him and his family ; he does not object to having gathered closer around him all those dear ones, whom he seems able to love more and better than at Petersburg. He is content with the plain stained deal desk in the smaller closet set aside as his study. There he works indefatigably with his secretary on the days—generally two a week—when his couriers bring him the home despatches. But as soon as his duty is done, he revels in shaking off all the outer semblance of his exalted rank. He likes to rise at five, and start at once on some shooting expedition in a two-wheeled trap,

which he drives himself. Neither the Prince of Wales nor the King of Greece, his two brothers-in-law, shows the same activity, or offers to join him, when they happen to be at Fredensborg; they keep aloof from the matutinal sport; but Prince and Princess Waldemar are frequently his companions. The latter—like many of the ladies of her family, the Comtesse de Paris especially—knows how to handle a gun and to bring down her quarry. They all shoot from the carriage at the game as it passes. About nine o'clock they alight in some convenient spot, and partake of the simple fare they have brought with them. They hurry over the meal, so as to have another couple of hours of sport, and yet be back at the Castle in time for the mid-day breakfast at which all King Christian's guests assemble. In the afternoon the Czar sometimes goes to Copenhagen by train; when he gets there he takes a cab, and does his shopping like any ordinary tourist. This leaving behind of the strait-waistcoat of etiquette is infinitely precious to him, and he indulges at times in the most unconventional and unexpected actions. One evening, King Christian had summoned a clever conjurer to

Fredensborg, to amuse the party with his tricks, which were exceptionally clever. At the close of the performance, Alexander III., who is possessed of extraordinary athletic strength and muscular power, walked up to the prestidigitateur, and took from his hands a full pack of cards, which he smilingly proceeded to tear asunder with one single movement of his hands. Any one tempted to try the experiment of rending fifty-two cards, closely placed on the top of each other, will find it no easy feat.

His eldest son, the Czarevitch, a youth in his twentieth year, has already been spoken of as the probable husband of half the marriageable princesses of Europe, and never more persistently than when his choice was supposed to have fallen on the youngest Princess of Hesse. The Russians have not forgotten the beautiful Empress that Darmstadt has already given them in the person of his grandmother. The Grand Duke Nicholas has rarely filled a prominent part as yet. However in 1887 he accompanied the Emperor and Empress to the Crimea, and thence to the Caucasus, where he was presented to the Cossacks of the Don, who took their oath of allegiance to him as their Great Ataman, and

according to custom the chiefs presented him with bread and salt on a golden platter.

The dignity of Great Ataman is in the gift of the Czar, who habitually confers it on his heir in order to strengthen by the ties of loyalty and honour the incorporation of the Cossacks into the great Russian community. They are closely connected with Muscovite history. They conquered Siberia in the North, and in the South kept the Turks in check; they crossed the St. Gothard under Souvaroff, and entered Paris with Platoff; they excited the admiration of Napoleon I. for their bravery and endurance, and in the last war, led by General Gourko, they marched over the Balkans and performed prodigies of valour. In consideration of this service, this heroic population enjoys exceptional privileges.

In 1870 the Cossacks were made lawful proprietors of the lands they had up to that time cultivated, and the "Black Country" was henceforth their accepted Fatherland. The Cossack is a soldier at seventeen, and wears a uniform till he is fifty. He holds himself eternally in readiness to obey superior orders, to start as an escort or as a scout, to fight

in a frontier raid or to fly across the country on his half-wild steed, carrying despatches. When he returns from these dashing exploits, he tills the earth, raises cattle, breeds horses, works salt mines, and catches fish. He is a mighty hunter also, for the steppes of the Don are the Nimrod's El Dorado.

Stalwart, strong, and frugal, the Cossacks have one weakness, their inordinate passion for the fiery alcohol they call *vodki*, which they absorb in appalling quantities. Their capital, Novo Tcherkask, is built at the mouth of a deep, broad valley, and resembles a chess-board, with its straight avenues intersecting each other at right angles, and of such enormous width that whole regiments can manœuvre with ease in their spacious thoroughfares. The nobility entertain a great deal during the winter, and incredible as it may seem, the distant Caucasian city boasts of such modern improvements as tram cars and telephonic offices in full operation. The country and its inhabitants are an inexhaustible source of wealth, power, and glory for Russia. The Cossacks are her best soldiers. The Emperor Alexander III., who has a keen military judgment and knows how to select his troops,

draws all his cavalry from the territory of the Ukraine. The present Great Ataman of the Cossacks, in spite of his warlike title, has little of the enterprising chieftain and leader of wild hordes ; he is of a gentle, quiet, and amiable disposition. He possesses a tenor voice of singular purity and flexibility, and thoroughly trained, although, owing to the delicacy of his health as a youth, he was several times compelled to interrupt his musical studies. On one occasion the Czarevitch had been singing some difficult pieces before an artist who complimented him on his talent and progress. "Yes," he answered, smiling a little dubiously, "I might have been successful in opera as *tenor di grazia*, but not in parts requiring much power and strength. I am too slender to be cast for heroes."

The Court resides alternately at the Winter Palace, the Anitchkoff Palace, and Gatchina, with occasional visits to Moscow ; Royal guests are entertained at the Hermitage facing the Neva, and communicating with the Winter Palace by a raised bridge. It is sumptuously appointed, and contains innumerable works of art ; the first that strikes the eye is an undraped statue of Madame Dubarry on the grand staircase.

The Schah of Persia stayed at the Hermitage several times ; and the same stories were told which had already circulated in Paris, of the absolute want of common decency in his habits and those of his followers, necessitating a complete renovation of any apartments he had occupied for ever so short a time. These accounts were to a certain degree contradicted ; but it remained a matter of universal belief at St. Petersburg that the Persian potentate took all his meals alone, and at the close of the repast turned into one large receptacle all the remnants of the dishes, including soup, meat, sweets, and fruit, and sent this delectable *olla podrida* to his suite who respectfully made their dinner off it.

Notwithstanding the economical changes introduced by the Empress, the scale on which distinguished visitors are treated is one of unparalleled magnificence. The reception is regulated by an invariable etiquette. If a reigning sovereign visits the Emperor, the latter goes to meet him at a stated distance from the capital ; if it is a Crown Prince, he sends the Czarevitch ; and if only a member of

a Royal family, a Grand Duke is detached to bid him welcome. But all find at the Hermitage a full suite of Russian attendants attached to their person during their stay, from the Imperial aide-de-camp who has waited for them at the frontier, to the chamberlains, officers, ladies-in-waiting, ushers, butlers, maids, footmen, cooks, coachmen, and grooms. The Czar pays the first call, which is instantaneously returned. This exchange of civilities does not occupy half an hour.

Even State dinners begin punctually at the old conservative time of six, and never last more than one hour. The banquet is, Russian fashion, preceded by the *Zakonska*, or *hors d'œuvres*, served in an ante-room, partaken of standing, and consisting of caviar, anchovies, salted fish, sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, washed down with kummel, curaçao, and *vodki*—the indigenous white brandy. The late Emperor, Alexander II., had three distinct and separate sets of *officiers de bouche*, under the supervision of three independent *maitres d'hôtel*, each squad doing duty for a week at a stretch. Gastronomic emulation nerved them all to outshine each other in the

excellence of their *cuisine*. The Imperial family chiefly maintained the unfashionable dinner hour in order to be present at the theatres, one of which they visited every available night. They are preceded by a van carrying all the requisites for tea, which is prepared in offices adjoining the sitting-room of the Royal box, and served between the acts, generally about ten, when the wait is made longer for that purpose. The Czarina specially patronises the Theatre Michel and the French plays.

Alexander III. has modified the treble service, which was but a pretext for unprincipled extravagance. When he travels he takes with him only one *maitre d'hôtel*, an Italian named Raymondi, who was in his service before he came to the throne. The outlay of the commissariat is covered by a fixed sum paid to the head of the culinary department, who caters not only for the Imperial table, but for the tables of the suite, to which are bidden all officers sent on a mission to Petersburg from any part of Russia or Siberia, and who are entertained according to their rank. It is not uncommon, when a guest speaks of the way in which he dined, to hear him say: "I

was at '*la propre*,' an expression not implying any special cleanliness, but understood to mean that the *menu* of the table at which he sat was exactly the same as that of the "*propre table de l'Empereur*."

The splendour of the Imperial receptions dwarfs to insignificance those of other European Courts; they have, besides their actual magnificence, a semi-barbaric wealth of decoration and costume, a glitter of arms, a sparkle of diamonds, a richness of colour which is characteristic of Slavonic races; they derive an added importance from the magnitude of the palaces in which they are held, and the number and size of richly furnished apartments thrown open to the guests. At the Winter Palace and the Kremlin, it has more than once taken some diplomat, quartered at either of those two residences during the temporary stay of his prince or sovereign, from fifteen to twenty minutes to get from one suite of rooms to another on the same floor.

The Court gives two categories of balls to which only the first of the four classes of Russian nobility are invited; besides these the Czarina has small dances on Thursdays which are

very exclusive. The Winter Palace, lit by electricity, is, besides, on those occasions illuminated by Bengal fires that shed a fairy light over the grand staircase of the Ambassadors, and the supper is served in groves of palm-trees and exotics. Colossal negroes stand out like ebony statues against the gorgeous hangings, and giant Georgians, wearing the Caucasian dress, guard all the issues. After the guests are assembled, a mysterious and several times repeated "pst," "pst," warns them that the Court is approaching; Prince Troubetzkoi, the Grand Marshal, appears, the orchestra plays the Russian hymn, and their Majesties enter the ball-room, followed by a crowd of glittering high officials. The Czar usually wears the dark green uniform of a Russian General, his sash is white, his headdress, the tall cap of white astrachan, on his breast are the ribbons and stars of the Orders of St. Vladimir, St. George, the White Eagle, and St. Alexander Newski. The Empress, youthful still in face and figure, is always dressed to perfection, and absolutely scintillates with the gems that cover her neck, arms, bosom, and even the hem of her robes. On the day of her

coronation it was estimated that she had about her person thirty million francs' worth of gems. She never wears feathers or flowers in her hair ; her habitual *coiffure* is a diaphanous veil falling from her diadem, the transparent folds forming a becoming background to her piquant face.

Her favourite residence is the Anitchkoff Palace, which, in its interior arrangements, recalls the refined elegance and homelier comforts of Sandringham ; there the Czarina renders homage to her illustrious compatriots by giving the place of honour in her library to copies and models of Thorwaldsen. She has remained a true Dane at heart, and is yet Russian enough to have strong French sympathies. Every number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and the *Figaro* finds its way to her hands. Even the existing state of things in France has not shaken her allegiance to that country, although it can hardly be expected that the daughter-in-law of a murdered monarch, and the consort of one whose life is hourly threatened, should look favourably on the avowed allies of Krapotkine, or the upholders of a policy the menacing echo of which reaches the steps of her throne.

When the Court goes to Gatchina it exchanges the fears and apprehensions of Petersburg for others equally harassing; not all the multiplied precautions could avail against a Nihilist desperado, who, representing not the mass of the nations but a fractional party, considers murder the holy instrument of patriotic heroism.

Gatchina, some years ago, was little known save for its kennels; it lies between the two summer residences of Tzarkoe Selo and Krasnoe Selo. The Castle was built by Peter the Great, who gave it to his sister Nathalie, and was later on bestowed by the Empress Catherine on Prince Orloff, who had it enlarged and improved by an Italian architect. At the death of her favourite, Catherine bought it back, and allowed the Grand Duke Paul to occupy it. From that time to this it was but rarely inhabited, and, indeed, was not particularly habitable. It has the shape of an elongated square, each angle being formed by a tower. It is three storeys high, the lower one supported by pillars of Finland marble. The interior was absolutely commonplace until Marie Feodorovna

bethought herself to adorn it by transferring to its walls some of the valuable pictures of the Hermitage and Winter Palace. The chief beauty of Gatchina lies in its park, which is large and finely wooded with old trees, a stream runs through it, and it contains two picturesque little lakes ; it abuts on a large forest which, within the last few years, has been entirely enclosed at an enormous expense. Forest, park, and castle are narrowly watched and strictly guarded when the Court is in residence. To realise in all its horror the life of the Czar and Czarina, nothing more is needed than to consider what incessant vigilance is imperative to avert a fatality.

The journey from Petersburg to Gatchina by rail takes an hour. Along the line are stationed picquets of troops, camping in the open air, at short distances from each other. Small detachments are perpetually patrolling the adjacent roads leading to the Castle, with orders to stop all wayfarers and demand to see their papers ; Cossacks, mounted on their fleet little horses, ride incessantly to and fro ; the railway station, used solely by the Court, is garrisoned

like a citadel ; no person not belonging to the Imperial household can either alight from a train or enter it at that point. Around the walls of the Park a cordon of sentinels is placed, the men standing twenty-five yards apart ; they are relieved every hour in order to leave them no excuse for relaxing their vigilance. Admittance to either the Park or the Castle is only granted—even to the well-known servants and officials—on presentation of a card or ticket, the colour of which is changed every week. None of the dwellers in Gatchina are permitted to lock their doors by day or by night ; the overseer of Imperial residences, and the chief of the *Police de Sûreté*, have the right to search any apartment at their discretion.

The difficulty of carrying on this minute surveillance is much enhanced by the morbid aversion the Czar and Czarina entertain to being watched. Alexander III. stoutly refuses to relinquish his ordinary pursuits ; he insists upon shooting, hunting, fishing, and rowing, and much prefers walking out alone, even when he ventures into the depths of the forest, keeping up the fiction that he needs no protection. De-

tectives, whose instructions are to escape his notice, stealthily dog his footsteps in various disguises, and more than once have been arrested as conspirators by other detectives on similar duty. The Empress, who was formerly so fearless, is now wrought up to a pitch of such nervous anxiety that she cannot bear to lose sight of her husband, and in order to lessen the number of his solitary excursions, she has had two long galleries built at Gatchina, which her ingenious tenderness has filled with every conceivable device for amusing and occupying him ; but it is more to please her than for any other reason that he consents, on rainy days, to take quarter-deck exercise in those lengthy corridors. Sometimes the Imperial couple spend a few hours at St. Petersburg, dispensing with a visible military escort. On several occasions the Czar has shown remarkable coolness and self-control. A year or two ago, during a large fire raging in one of the narrowest streets of the city, he remained some time in the midst of the surging and heaving crowds perfectly unmoved and impassible. The aide-de-camp, who accompanied him, said afterwards :

"I would prefer walking alone in a lane, at each end of which stood cannon ready to fire on me, than to find myself a second time among such rabble with the Czar."

When audiences are granted at Gatchina, the persons thus favoured are met by Court carriages, which stop on the further side of a drawbridge at the gates of the Park, guarded at either end by a post of soldiers and before they are allowed to proceed, a functionary requests the visitor—whatever be his rank—and the accompanying aide-de-camp, to produce their admission cards and credentials. The same formality is repeated at the doors of the Castle, after which the guest is conducted through long and tortuous passages and narrow staircases to the apartments reserved for him; his name is inscribed on a tablet affixed to the door, and were his stay to be only of a couple of hours, a complete suite of rooms is placed at his disposal.

On every landing sentinels present arms with a peculiar movement; they throw their arms forward, and allow their gun, held at full length, to drop to the ground sharply, producing a

sonorous rap which seems doubly loud in the profound stillness of the Castle; this unmistakable sound is presumably meant to advise the next sentinel of the advent of a stranger. A large, lofty guard-room, occupied by a detachment of one hundred men of the Imperial Guard, is reached at last; the credentials have to be shown once more before entering a fine hall, supported on marble pillars, whence arises the monumental Golden Staircase, so called on account of its heavily gilt balusters in the Renaissance style. On the upper steps, two huge Tcherkesses, daggers and pistols in their belts, guard the folding doors, which being silently opened by an usher, give access to the private reception rooms of the Czarina.

Day by day the light-hearted gaiety of Marie Feodorovna fades out of her dark eyes and winsome smile; the brave heart still strives to hide its fears, but it can no longer master them; the face occasionally wears an expression of startled sadness, more pathetic than tears, and a hopelessness born of repeated shocks. Even her love of music no longer brings the peace she so much requires; but she never fails to

take her part in the little *intime* gatherings, accompanying on the piano the Czar, who plays the violin; she has a sweet, if not a powerful voice, and sings with charming grace the picturesque national melodies, striving to forget, in their soft cadence, that the Russia she loves, and who loves her, can no longer give her immunity and freedom from an ever-present terror.

No one has gauged, not Russia herself, the hidden treasures and unrevealed resources of her more distant and half-savage provinces. To the land of the Muscovite may be with equal justice applied the words of the clever French translator of Edgar Poe, when he called America "a barbarism lit by electricity."

Petersburg and Moscow are tolerably well known; but the enterprising traveller or city-bred native hesitates to enter those remote territories where despotism reigns supreme and a civilisation in its infancy ignores the application of the boundless wealth they contain. Of such is the Ural, the wild range where the Demidoffs and a few others owned tracts as widespread as whole principalities elsewhere, and

serfs whose name is legion ; the land divided by a wall of rock from Asia, and only within a few years approached by railways.

Towards the year 1550, the Strogonoffs colonised the territory extending between the river Vytchegda and the mountains, built large settlements, and, in order to hold them against the rude Siberian tribes, hired the services of a band of Cossacks commanded by the famous Jismack. When he had with their assistance conquered the whole of Western Siberia, the head of the Strogonoff family presented the territory to the Czar, Ivan the Terrible, as a free gift, and it became a province of the empire.

In another part of the Ural country, two Demidoffs, son and grandson of peasants, discovered silver mines, and between 1716 and 1725 founded large mining works, some of which eventually passed into the possession of the wealthier Yarovieffs. Peter the Great, in one of his journeys, stopped at Toula, and partook of food at the house of Nikita Demidoff, who placed Rhine wine on the table. The Czar remarked, with some severity, that no ordinary workman should indulge in a costly exotic beverage.

"Sire," answered Nikita, "the workman drinks neither wine nor brandy; but nothing is too good for the Czar."

"In your house, Nikita," said Peter, "I drink only Russian wine" (he meant corn brandy).

At the close of the meal the Emperor granted Demidoff the right to use hydraulic machines, and the free possession of a goodly portion of the land. The new owner found iron on his property; and, during the war with Sweden, was privileged to provide the Government with guns and other weapons. He was summoned to the Imperial Palace of Moscow to receive the grant of the Neviaskaia works on condition of keeping the army supplied with arms and ammunition at a specially low price. To this favour was added the legal appropriation of all copper and iron mines he might in future discover in the Ural, the State reserving to itself only the silver ones. His eldest son, Akaufy, founded six more mining works; but, not being as honest as his father, he passed off a silver mine for a copper one, exploiting it for his own benefit, purchasing silence and complicity by enormous bribes, and only reveal-

ing the find as a fresh discovery at a much later date. The husband of Princess Mathilde, sister of Prince Napoleon, was one of the same family of Demidoffs, who later assumed the title of Prince. Their fortune was incalculable, and their palaces at Petersburg and Florence were crowded with the most costly specimens of European art.

Another of the great original land-owners in the Ural are the Gagarines. Under Peter the Great a Prince Gagarine was the official administrator of Siberia ; he was accused of treason and of making personal profits out of the embarrassments of the Czar during the Swedish war. Colonel George Pasekoff was sent to investigate the case. One of the counts of the indictment was that Gagarine fostered insurrection and courted favour with the natives by not wearing a wig and discarding the Russian dress. He had become fabulously rich ; the tires of his carriage wheels and the shoes of his horses were of solid silver ; the sacred images found in every room of a Muscovite house were encrusted with precious stones worth many thousand roubles. The Prince was decoyed to Moscow under false

pretences, imprisoned for seven years, put seven times to the torture, and — confessed nothing ! Meanwhile his son was travelling and spending money recklessly ; he, too, was arrested on his return to Russia, likewise put on the rack, and, less steadfast than his father, gave up the secret of Gagarine's intrigues. Strangely enough, the Chinese functionaries in Siberia and the Swedish prisoners petitioned for the Prince's pardon, on the plea of his exceeding kindness and gentleness to the exiles. Peter the Great confiscated a large portion of the Gagarine estates, and handed them over to Colonel Pasekoff, to whom they brought neither good luck nor happiness. One of his descendants, the most beautiful and fascinating woman in Berlin society at the time of the Crimean war, was the wife of Count Schuvaloff, the Russian Secretary of Legation in that city.

The region of the Ural, however, owes much of its comparative prosperity to three common labourers — the two brothers Twerdicheff and their brother-in-law Miasnikoff. One day Peter the Great, the legendary hero of Russian history, whose name is mixed with all its traditions,

crossing the Volga in a ferry-boat, was struck with the energy and intelligence of those men, and asked them why, instead of plying their unremunerative trade on the river, they did not seek their fortune in the East. They alleged their want of capital. The Czar immediately handed to them five hundred roubles, with the injunction to start for the Ural, adding: "If you discover any mines they are yours, and I shall forward you money to work them. Go! A Czar's word is God's word!" The ferrymen obeyed; and, having been successful in finding copper and iron, they erected eight important mining works, at one of which—Voskresensk—the house they lived in, still exists.

Another historical family of the Ural provinces is that of Sibiriski, descending from the original ruler of Siberia, who at one time audaciously took the title of Czarevitch. After the catastrophe which terminated fatally for the son of Peter the Great, the Sibiriskis fell into disgrace, and were prohibited from ever bearing the Imperial appellation. The last scion of this once all-powerful race does nothing to restore it to its former splendour and importance.

He spends a useless and frivolous life at St. Petersburg in the society of ballet-dancers, and attempts to dazzle those frail Danaës by having his visiting-cards printed "Prince of Siberia." When the Emperor Alexander II. heard of this vagary, he merely observed, "Let him take care that I do not send him back to his provinces." Sibiriski took timely warning, and had less ostentatious cards printed.

As late as forty years ago, the great proprietors of the Ural were able to buy from the nomadic Kirghizes large tracts of land for a few pounds of tea, and the boundaries were marked out almost at random. Now that the value of the ground, with its incalculable subterranean treasures, is better estimated, the limits of each estate are strictly defined by legislation. This marvellous region, the Golconda of the universe, abounds with every variety of precious mineral, metal, or gem. Gold, silver, platinum, copper, iron, emerald, amethysts glowing with that rare purple fire so dear to connoisseurs, liquid aqua marines, orange-hued topazes, malachite, lapis-lazuli, porphyry, and many more exist in boundless profusion. The Blagodatskiy mountain is a

block of magnetic iron, 765 feet high. The gold mines have enriched many Russian families ; but, with the exception of the Princess Soltikoff, heiress of her father, Ivan Garovieff, they have not known how to keep their fortune, and their rent-roll does not equal that of many British or American millionaires. The reason is simple. What the father makes the son spends, generally abroad, often in unbridled dissipation, so that the third generation is frequently ruined. This, however, applies only to the modern orthodox Russians, not to the few old dissenting families who have preserved the traditions of a quiet, retired, dignified life. At Ekaterinburg, Orenburg, and other Siberian cities, they seem the forgotten phantoms of another century, having nothing common with the present era. Wives receive other women of the outer world in rooms set apart for the "impure ;" if they are compelled by circumstances to ask them to any meal, the viands are cooked in reserved vessels, and served in dishes never used by the dissidents. In the very strict homes the "impure" are not allowed to enter, and if one of them is forced by chance or accident on the inhabitants, the china they

have handled is broken, the floors scrubbed with holy water, and the apartments fumigated with incense. In their unhallowed presence the sacred images are veiled, so that their painted eyes should not rest on the profane "orthodox" intruder.

The Siberians have repeatedly expressed a wish that a wall might separate them from Russia, and protect them against the inroads of Russian depravity; but if they once become inoculated with it, they astonish even St. Petersburg with their lavish extravagance and unprincipled recklessness. It is the lack of personal supervision and conscientious management which causes the richest mines and finest estates of the Ural to run to waste or fall, for a song, into the hands of the foreign speculator. Voskrensenski, for instance, was purchased for an almost nominal price by an English Company, although it embraces, besides its various productive mines, immense forests, extensive grass lands, a village of 1,200 inhabitants, large factories, and six lordly residences. Copper ore lies in the woods almost on the surface of the soil.

It is not uncommon to come upon shafts

roughly opened by the Kirghizes and abandoned by them, although they would have been capable of yielding a fortune to any one endowed with sufficient energy to exploit them properly. The river Noujousch rolls golden sands, and the range of the Prevlajensk is rich in auriferous quartz; but on all sides the wealthy substratum lies dormant for want of arms and labour. Even the rich, dark soil of the plains remains uncultivated, yet it could elbow America out of the market with its harvests, and in other parts of Russia the population clamours for bread. But as in some other countries given up to misery, hunger, despair, and the attending fiend, Revenge, the curse of absenteeism is on the territory of the Ural.

In 1852 there came to Paris a woman who in her youth had been dazzlingly beautiful; she was known at first as the Princess Dadian, but by degrees society gave her her real title of Princess of Mingrelia. This hitherto ignored principality had, a couple of years before, been, so to speak, introduced to the Parisians by a stranger coming from this *terra incognita* wear-

ing the national costume, accompanied by Count Roucheleff and his brother-in-law, the American medium and spiritualist, Home. He proved a species of herald, bringing the customs, dress, and manners of wild Mingrelia into the most civilised and modern capital of Europe.

The Princess Dadian had been dispossessed of her sovereign rights by Russia; but she had not surrendered them without an heroic struggle. She had in person, on horseback, led her gallant band of soldiers across the mountains and the plains to do battle with the enemy, and had only bid them lay down their weapons when she felt that further resistance was worse than useless. The victors, however, so far recognised her claims and her title, that they entered upon a compromise, offering her a large indemnity in money for the cession of her rights, and being powerless to refuse, she submitted, and signed her renunciation.

She had three children: Prince Nicholas, who at one time had been designated by European policy as the successor of the fugitive Battenberg at Belgrade; a daughter, Salomé, who inherited her mother's beauty, and married Prince Achille Murat, and another boy.

The Parisians rather pride themselves on being on familiar terms with Mingrelia, the Colchis of the ancients, and like to recall how the young Caucasian Prince Nicholas was educated in their midst at the College Louis-le-Grand, that in 1870 he was gazetted to the Russian *Chevaliers Gardes*, became a colonel, distinguished himself in the Turco-Russian war, was made aide-de-camp to the Czar, and married a daughter of Count Adlerberg, the friend and councillor of the Emperor. At the beginning of their stay in Paris, Princess Dadian and her children occupied rooms at the Hôtel du Louvre; but even in those restricted quarters they received the best Russian and French society. The Sunday "At homes" of the Princess were quite the fashion, and when young people were present in sufficient numbers, dancing was carried on with great spirit, Prince Nicholas leading the cotillon in boyish unconsciousness of future successes and honours. Princess Salomé, who by her marriage had become allied to the Imperial family, has since the fall of the Empire lived almost entirely with her husband on her estates in Mingrelia, whither she has brought the learning, elegance, and refinement of Paris.

CHAPTER V.

General Komaroff — M. de Giers — Prince Gortchakof —
Prince Bismarck — M. de Rottenburg — Friedrichsruhe.

HISTORY has singular coincidences, and at times links the names of men so closely with that of this country, that as soon as the latter meets the eye, the vision of these sons of the fatherland is evoked; even in the more dazzling light shed from the throne, they shine with individual brilliancy, and the subject asserts himself almost on the same line with his sovereign. To mention Russia is to call up memories of her generals and her statesmen, Ignatieff, Komaroff, M. de Giers, and, looming above them, the phantom of the friend, rival, and colleague of another Titan, Prince Gortchakof.

General Komaroff is one of the brilliant pleiad of learned and experienced military men,

who, having won their epaulettes in the Imperial Guard, do not abjure their severer studies and duties to give themselves up entirely to the fascinating pleasures of St. Petersburg, and the easy life led by some of the officers of that elegant and admired corps. For them harder work follows their promotion. They enter the Military Academy, remain there a few years, and after an exceedingly stiff examination, in which only merit tells, and neither rank, position nor favour avails, they pass, if successful, into the *Etat Major*. It is from that body that the government selects the most distinguished men for the command of regiments, the military Governorships, and sometimes the organisation of provinces, and frequently entrusts them with special missions requiring tried capacity as much as personal energy.

The Military Academy is the great school of Russia; it confers on all who leave it an order consisting of its initials surrounded by a laurel wreath in silver. This simple *zuatchoik*, or emblem, is held in great esteem; it creates among those who wear it a sort of freemasonry and brotherhood, and generals, on whose breasts

glitter the stars of countless orders, are never seen without the unpretending badge that tells where they graduated in arms.

General Komaroff's whole career was spent in the *Etat Major*; the quarters of that corps, built in a semi-circle facing the Winter Palace, form with that building the magnificent square in the centre of which rises a tall column of pink marble. In 1881, after having rendered many services, the General was appointed Chief of the hardy, turbulent Caucasian mountaineers; he remained eighteen months at Tiflis, discharging his by no means easy duties with incessant vigilance; one of his daughters, as active and untiring as himself, was his constant companion in his military excursions over the mountains. He was at the end of that time sent to the Transcaspian provinces as Governor, to replace General Kerberg, a post of extreme importance, as the country under his jurisdiction is virtually the highway to India, *viâ* Batoum, Tiflis, and Bakou, the Black Sea being connected with the Caspian by a railway which from the opposite shore has been carried on to Merv.

Short of stature, and inclined to stoutness,

General Komaroff has the true soldier's gift of inspiring respect and enforcing obedience; at once just and kind, without weakness and without violence he carries his point; he has progressed with the age in his management of the Russian troops, understanding that the Draconian law of corporal punishment can no longer be successfully applied to men enfranchised from serfdom, infinitely more civilised than their fathers, and amenable to other influences than tyrannical authority; he maintains the same rigorous discipline without reverting to vexatious rules, and has virtually abolished the old and once universal penalty of the *knout*.

There are three Komaroffs, all Generals, and frequently taken one for the other, each having distinguished himself in his profession, although one brother was defeated and killed at the battle of Zevin, near Kars, during the Turco-Russian war; but the one who has achieved the highest reputation is the Governor of the Transcaspian provinces, who administered so sharp a lesson to the Afghans.

M. de Giers, on whom a heavy political heredity has descended, was born in 1820; and

entered the diplomatic service in 1838 ; he spent nearly all the best years of his manhood in quiet, unimportant foreign posts, successively Councillor of Legation at Constantinople, Minister at Teheran, Stockholm, and Berne. It was from Switzerland, that Prince Gortchakof, his friend and patron, summoned him in 1875 to entrust him with the functions of Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, having formed an estimate of his character which gave him the assurance that he could select no better man. The Russian Chancellor was feeling the weight of his years and the weakening of his physical powers at the very moment when his country called upon the uttermost resources of his genius ; he felt the want of a devoted *collaborateur*, willing to model his opinions on those of his chief, and act with him while remaining steadily in the background. The opening era was bringing to the country bitter disappointments, murderous tragedies and prolonged anxieties. Prince Gortchakof was failing rapidly : the brilliant flame of his great intellect burnt only in fitful flashes ; but, till it flickered and went out, he remained staunchly and unflinchingly at his post, clinging,

if only in appearance, to the helm of that ship he had brought through so many storms; nevertheless, his enforced absences from the Foreign Office were becoming more numerous and prolonged, and in the same proportion the importance of M. de Giers' position was strengthened. From being purely passive he began to take the initiative, so that when, after seven years of viceroyalty, the death of the Chancellor left the higher place empty, no one wondered to see him quietly step into it; the change occurred by a gentle and almost imperceptible transition without disturbing the old traditions.

When Ministers of State bring to the exercise of their functions a large share of personal responsibility, they are naturally exposed to all the vicissitudes and accidents of politics, none more so than those entrusted with the Portfolio of Foreign Affairs. As long as they are successful they are extolled, but should they fail they are at once sacrificed by constitutional monarchies. Not so at St. Petersburg. The Czar not only reigns but governs; his Cabinet works not with him, but under him, a representative power only, transmitting and

executing his commands. In his letters on Russia, written over thirty years ago, Marshal Moltke says, with his clear, impartial judgment of men and things :

“In no other country has the power of the monarch as much importance as in Russia, because nowhere else is such illimitable power vested in his hands.”

The Czar is sovereign master of the destinies of his people at home and abroad ; he possesses the absolute right of proclaiming war, and of altering the internal conditions of his empire. Hence nothing more really simple than the wonderful stability of Russian Ministers of Foreign Affairs who remain in office for fifty years ; in their subservience to the Imperial authority they are beyond the pale of political vicissitudes. Whatever may be Russia's utterances in the affairs of the world, M. de Giers is *de facto* only the Czar's mouthpiece ; but he has to be that with tact, *finesse*, a keen faculty for choosing the opportune moment, a subtle appreciation of coming or probable events, and be endowed with the gift of reporting his observations to his master in a wise, conciliatory

spirit. These faculties and qualities are possessed by M. de Giers in no ordinary degree. He does not resemble those brilliant, worldly Russian functionaries whom one's fancy depicts as basking in Imperial smiles, favourites to be flattered and courted; dazzling society by their lavish magnificence; on the contrary M. de Giers is of a different and more modern school, whose shrewd common-sense, sincere patriotism, and earnest application to work, are the chief recommendations, and where the glamour of outward pomp is of small account.

M. de Giers visited Montreux, the sheltered little town on the shores of Lake Lemman, in the year 1883, but he was not seeking relaxation from his arduous labours, change of scene, or amusement; he came to see his young daughter, ordered there by her doctors; she was slowly dying of consumption, and every day of the chill November month was bringing her nearer to her grave. She had been an object of pitying interest to the visitors of the Swiss hillside, and they looked with no less sympathy than curiosity on the quiet, unobtrusive, sad, and silent father, in whom it was difficult to recog-

nise a powerful statesman. He sought solitude without ostentation; but when casually drawn into conversation he talked calmly, precisely, with a simple yet courteous directness. He was then sixty-five years old, not looking his age, for his figure was straight, his gait firm, and altogether he presented a splendid specimen of his own vigorous Northern race.

But however sterling the merits of M. de Giers, his career sinks into insignificance when confronted with the fame of his giant predecessor. There is a weird majesty in the names of the two Chancellors of the nineteenth century, Gortchakof and Bismarck—names that will ever remain legendary in history because they have soared for weal or for woe, so immeasurably above the crowd of their contemporaries—because generations have come and gone, finding them still standing, immovable and unshaken as those granite rocks which have resisted the shock of ages, and defied the wind and fire of heaven. One is living, the other is dead, but they remain undivided in public veneration as they were in their political sphere, endowed by the gods with supernatural vitality and an almost eternal life.

So prolonged has the life of Prince Gortchakof been, that its *débuts* are already beginning to fade from the mind of those who have not forgotten the exploits of the latter decades, and it is to the earlier days and origin of Gortchakof that the chronicler, who has seen him in his old age, turns with unconscious curiosity.

Like the Obolenskis, the Dolgoroukis, and other aristocratic families on the banks of the Moskova and the Neva, the Gortchakofs claim to descend from the Rouricks, and more particularly from one Michel, Grand Duke of Tchernigoff, who was put to death towards the middle of the thirteenth century by the Mongolians, considered by the orthodox Church as a martyr, and ranked among its saints. The family, however, does not often appear in the earlier records of Muscovite annals preceding the advent of the Romanofs. One, Peter Ivanovitch Gortchakof, however, Commander of Smolensk, surrendered this celebrated fortress to the Poles after two years of heroic defence; and in 1611, with the Czar Vassili, was one of the *cortège* of captives presented to the Senate of the *Serenissime* Republic. It was only in

the second half of the last century, under the reign of Catherine II., that Prince Ivan Gortchakof was successful in restoring to his house some of its ancient splendour, and then chiefly by marrying the daughter and heiress of the wealthy Souvaroff. From that time fortune has constantly smiled on his descendants, who have distinguished themselves at different times as soldiers and servants of the State. Two Gortchakofs achieved a military fame in the Eastern war; one commanded the Russian troops at the Alma and at Inkermann, another, Prince Michel, General-in-Chief of the Czar's armies in the Crimea, was one of the heroic defenders of Sebastopol. The cousin of that Prince Michel was Alexander Mikhaïlovitch Gortchakof, Chancellor of the Russian Empire.

He was born in 1798, and educated at the Lyceum of Tzarkoe Selo, founded by Catherine II. as a model school for the aristocratic Muscovite youth. They learnt to become gentlemen in manners, *grands seigneurs* in their tastes and habits; for externals were of more consequence than instruction in their sphere of life, and classics were considered equally superfluous in Court and

camp, which did not prevent that establishment from occasionally turning out learned men and clever scholars. The professors were mostly foreigners; the French master was a brother of Marat, the sanguinary *Conventionnel*, and had been compelled by the Empress to drop his sinister name and adopt the inoffensive one of M. de Boudry. Young Gortchakof was one of those who derived a solid advantage from his stay at Tzarkoe Selo; he left it a well-informed man, with a strong and varied grasp of general knowledge, and, more wonderful still, of Latin. He was never averse afterwards to airing the latter proficiency, quoting Horace freely, and even introducing a passage from Suetone in one of his most celebrated official despatches. The Chancellor often referred to his schooldays and to the friendship he formed then with another pupil of Tzarkoe Selo—the great national poet, Pouchkine. At a time when demonstrations not strictly in accordance with the prevailing tone of the Government were fraught with some peril, Alexander Mikhaïlovitch did not hesitate to give open testimony of loyalty to his friend. The rash youth had written a bold revolutionary ode, and

been sent by Alexander I. to meditate on his folly and do penance in a remote and obscure village at the furthest end of the kingdom. Only Gortchakof and one other had the courage to visit Pouchkine openly in his temporary banishment.

Prince Gortchakof entered the Foreign Office at a very early age, and has never embraced any save the diplomatic career in all its branches, ascending the rungs of the ladder step by step till he reached the highest; he accompanied M. de Nesselrode to the Congresses of Layback and Verona, and graduated for the post of Minister in unimportant legations. He had passed from youth to middle age, and was yet only Envoy at a small German Court, where he might have lingered in mediocrity longer still had not one of the fortunate circumstances which turn the tide of success for diplomats suddenly brought him *en évidence*. In an hour of weakness, the Emperor Nicholas had allowed his favourite daughter, Marie, to wed the Duke of Leuchtenberg, the son of a Beauharnais, a Catholic and an officer in the service of the King of Bavaria. To his mortification and chagrin, he soon discovered that at his Court

this marriage was looked upon as a *mésalliance*, and when in course of time a relative of his son-in-law married a Russian who had made his money in trade, and who, although calling himself a Prince in the valley of the Arno, was barely considered a gentleman in his own country, the Czar could not help seeing the consternation of his *entourage* at the extraordinary mishap which made the Autocrat of all the Russias actually connected with one of his subjects. It was therefore imperative to counteract this fatal impression by seeking for his other daughter, the Grand Duchess Alexandra, an alliance so brilliant that her sister's imprudent marriage would be forgotten in the splendour of these other nuptials. The choice of Nicholas had fallen on an Austrian Archduke; but not meeting with any response to this plan, he was all the more bent on securing for his youngest child, Olga, the hand of the heir presumptive to the Crown of Wurtemberg. The Russian Minister to the Court of Stuttgart was entrusted with the delicate negotiations. Prince Gortchakof was conscious of a latent opposition, the King hesitated, objections had to be removed,

prejudices conquered ; but with surprising cleverness he turned every difficulty, levelled every obstacle, and had the satisfaction of seeing the Grand Duchess Olga enthroned in the palace of Stuttgart, and his master's wish fulfilled. Henceforth his foot was in the stirrup, and it only remained for him to give the rein to his ambition. In 1830, he was accredited to the German Confederation, without losing his post in Wurtemberg, residing in turns on the Neckar and on the Mein. He liked Frankfurt, perhaps, because he could associate there with a Prussian officer of the Landwehr, a novice in diplomacy, but predestined to a prodigious future, laying, in their intercourse, the foundation of the friendship which for fifty years united Alexander Gortchakof and Otto von Bismarck.

In 1834 the former was transferred to Vienna, a post which in the Russian service is the *Baton de Maréchal* of all Ministers ; but he grasped it only to enter upon a long and painful conflict ; to experience the "Austrian ingratitude" that was to astonish the world ; to wear out his genius, his efforts, and his masterly energy in unavailing strife, and see his ardent devotion

to his country powerless to avoid a bloody, disastrous war ; to lay down the broken weapons of diplomacy, and await a *dénouement* which was eventually enacted on the ruined ramparts of Sebastopol. One Gortchakof was ready to pour out his life-blood for the defence of the Crimean fortress, while another, seated behind the green-covered table of the Vienna Conference, fought inch by inch for his country's honour, both doing their duty so bravely, that they won the respect and compelled the admiration of their victorious foes.

The defeat of Russia placed her in a critical position. Alexander Mikhaïlovitch suffered in his pride and love of his Fatherland ; each pang of its humiliation awoke in his breast a corresponding throb of rage and indignation against the treachery of a faithless ally. In the fervour of his anger during the Paris Congress, he exclaimed : "Austria is not a State, but a Government." The utterance preceded him to St. Petersburg, where he was received and acclaimed as a future avenger.

From that time, his career lies lucid and clear before the eyes of his contemporaries, who

have seen him successively Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Chancellor of the Empire, ever a dominant figure in the political convulsions of Europe, even when the towering stature of his former colleague at Frankfort began to overshadow his. He has on his record the fate of Sleswig and of Denmark; Sadowa, the *revanche* of Sebastopol; the Italian war, with the liberation of Italy; the Franco-German war, with the unification of Germany; he has wiped off the bitterness of great reverses, and was last present in the possession of his marvellous faculties at the Congress of Berlin. The meeting of the two Chancellors in St. Petersburg in the spring of 1878 was the epilogue of the joint action which had changed the face of the world. Having arrived at the apogee of human glory, and left no height unscaled, Prince Gortchakof had only to die, and it must be attributed to the sudden collapse of that great intelligence that his death at Baden-Baden was so lamentable an ending to a great life; a death contrasting so hideously with the patriotic statesman's life, that it was only saved from being pronounced ignoble by the respect and veneration which shrouded it from the world, a last homage to one who will

rank in the eyes of posterity with Mazarin, Richelieu, Metternich, and Talleyrand.

From the Russian to the German Chancellor the transition is rapid and inevitable ; they have together filled the century with the thunder of their exploits, having one common aim—the glory of their country—running in distinct but parallel roads ; and the triumphs of the latter are as far beyond cursory comment and superficial reading as the valiant, lifelong struggle of the former. It was well-nigh impossible to penetrate into the privacy and *intimité* of Prince Gortchakof ; and but few have of late years been allowed to see Bismarck otherwise than towering in his seat at the Reichstag, accompanying the Emperor he had helped to make, in some stately military pageant, or hurrying through the streets on foot, with his long stride, and tall stature rising a head and shoulders above the people, who respectfully made way before him.

Otto Edouard Leopold von Bismarck Schoenhausen cannot, like his friend Gortchakof, boast of having the blood of saints in his veins ; some historians of the Mark of Brandenburg—where lies the hereditary domain of Schoenhausen, in

which he was born on the 1st of April, 1815—go so far as to deny that his family was even noble, a circumstance of little importance, as in his person he successively endowed it with the titles of Count and Prince, carving his fortunes with the sword and the pen, his escutcheon with his fame, his power with his genius. The world has witnessed and read the long record, learnt it by heart to its peril or to its cost; it knows the almighty and despotic Chancellor, but is it as well acquainted with the Bismarck of the Wilhelmstrasse, the land-owner of Varzin, the family man of Friedrichsruhe?

In the lower end of the aristocratic and fashionable Wilhelmstrasse, with its smooth pavement and broad side-walks, is a palace, preceded by a *cour d'honneur*, close to an old gray building, the Foreign Office, or *Auswärtige Amt*, as the Germans call it, the head-quarters of the Staff of European politics; this palace is a gift from the Emperor to the Chancellor. The ten gentlemen in black frock-coats and tall hats—not a common head-dress in the German capital—seen issuing from it at all times of the day are Prince Bismarck's con-

fidential aides-de-camp, tutored to use their intellect in elaborating the views of their chief, and having no further ideas than those implanted into them by him, or those he expects to find. They are picked from the cleverest *Geheimräthe*, trained men in their profession; they have made themselves known, before being selected, by some peculiar aptitude, perhaps as the authors of a report or pamphlet which has attracted the attention of their master; they must have an irreproachable past, and be possessed of a certain fortune independently of their salary, which is ridiculously small; they are not the regular *employés* of the Foreign Office; they work incessantly, laboriously, regardless of time or fatigue, under the Chancellor's eye; they know that they will be instantly removed for the slightest error, or the faintest indiscretion, and ruthlessly sacrificed to the exigencies of the service. They form the Division I., created by M. de Bismarck for his own private interior policy.

Before the gates of the building stands perpetually a shabby old brougham, to which a lean old horse, driven by a wrinkled old coach-

man, is harnessed. The *Conseillers Intimes* are authorised to use this equipage when they are sent on a hurried errand; it has often been taken by Count Herbert von Bismarck when sent to the Emperor's palace with a report. As he is a perfect Anglomaniac in his estimation of what stable appointments should be, he winces at the general condition of his father's horses and carriages, which are plainer and uglier than those of a provincial gentleman never leaving his native city, and utterly careless of appearances.

Prince Bismarck cares neither for society, women, theatres, gambling, nor luxury; his servants are all ancient and indifferently dressed; they have opened the door to so many monarchs and princes that they are completely *blasés* as to rank, and respect only their master. It is perfectly true that the old hall-porter, having one day received the order not to admit any more visitors, quietly told the King of the Belgians, who happened to call: "Come back to-morrow, Majesty, *he* is asleep." Leopold II. smiled, turned away, and—came back the next day.

The chief characteristic of the Bismarcks is

their absolute disregard of what the French call *pose*, and which is a preoccupation of effects to be produced. *Pose* is, after all, a confession of doubt in oneself and a deference to the opinion of others, and the Bismarcks naïvely consider their house too important to court popularity. One and all, they act and behave as they think proper or right—which means in a way that pleases the Prince—judging that the universe cannot fail to accept everything coming from such superhuman grandeur. They do this unconsciously, without arrogance, from an innate conviction which nothing can disturb. The comforts and health of the Chancellor are the supreme question, the fundamental basis of all conversation. “How has he slept?” “What will he eat?” “Will he attend the Reichstag?” “Is he tired?” “Will he drive—walk?” are sentences that arise all day long in the family circle.

The dinner hour at the Wilhelmstrasse is six ; the Chancellor, so punctual in business, is always late at meals. When he does not entertain officially, he invites one of his “intimate Counsellors ;” the remainder of the party consisting of the Princess, Countess de Rantzau, his daughter,

with her husband, before his appointment to the Legation at Munich, Count Herbert when in Berlin, Dr. Schweninger, and M. de Rottenburg, chief of the *Reichskanzlei*.

This last official is entrusted with the transaction of all the minor affairs which it pleases the Prince to consider personally; he writes the letters of thanks for the countless presents of all sorts that come pouring in daily, and the answers to the equally numerous petitions. He has succeeded in winning the absolute confidence of his chief—not an easy matter—without exciting the jealousy of the remainder of the family—an even more difficult task, for they are prone to distrust, and generally wrap themselves in a cold reserve. M. de Rottenburg is discretion itself, a meritorious quality in so good a talker; he has travelled much, acquired an almost foreign geniality, and might have aspired to more apparently brilliant positions; but he judged—perhaps rightly—that, rich and ambitious as he was, he could not gratify his ambition better than by making himself the faithful servant and devoted friend of Bismarck, whom he accompanies in all his journeys.

After dinner the Chancellor lies on a broad sofa, sipping his coffee and smoking his long pipe; when affably disposed, he expounds at that hour his unofficial views, while the family and guests are grouped around him, listening to his utterance in rapt and silent veneration.

The Princess Bismarck, born Countess Patt-kamer, belongs to one of the oldest feudal families of Pomerania; she is now a woman of sixty-five, with no pretensions, although she has been very beautiful, entirely merged in her husband, and receiving only when it is absolutely necessary. She is often ailing, and society is irksome to her; few ladies are seen in her drawing-rooms, which are opened chiefly to the members of every Parliamentary party whom the Chancellor likes to bring around him on certain special occasions, when beer, brewed expressly at Munich for him, is served as refreshment. The Princess de Furstenberg, the lovely and witty daughter of the Prince de Sagan, and Princess Gurko Radzivill, *née* Branika, compose the female element of these grim gatherings; and not all the sprightliness and bright cleverness of these two young

women, called by their friends "Dolly" and "Bichette," can enliven the severe dulness of the official evenings.

The Bismarcks are fond of giving nicknames, and indulge among themselves in a somewhat heavy style of pleasantry; a person whom they invariably talked of as Mutter Holtzman turned out to be a most charming and venerable friend whom they highly valued. Still all strangers bore the Prince equally; he cares only for his family, and is tenderly attached to his daughter Marie. The Countess de Rantzau has great common sense; she has inherited the practical side of her father's character, is cheerful, likes creature comforts when they can be obtained without extravagant expense, is devoid of coquetry, considers dress only as necessary clothing, has smooth glossy hair worn in a plain old-fashioned way, a full round face, and laughing eyes. She is a good wife to her husband, whom she married at the age of thirty, having lost her first *Brautigam* a few days only before the day fixed for the wedding; she is likewise an excellent mother to her boys, whom she trains, however, in the general family worship for their

grandfather ; the eldest, Otto, named after him, comes every morning to kiss the Prince's hand, dressed in a diminutive cuirassier uniform. Bismarck delights in this ceremony, as in every demonstration of affection from his grandsons ; he likes to fondle them with his big hands, smooth their curls and faces between his broad palms, and in moments of *abandon* has been seen bestowing the same rough but playful caress on the head of his stalwart son, Count Herbert.

Little as the Chancellor is approachable in the Wilhelmstrasse, he is infinitely less so when he leaves Berlin and withdraws himself from the busy world to the seclusion of his country seats. He would then lead the obscure life of any rural land-owner, were it not for the mass of letters, despatches, and telegrams, that invade his seclusion and interfere with the complete repose after which overworked nature craves. He loves to escape into the shadow of his trees bending their lofty heads under the rude assault of the northern winds ; if he does not wield the axe like a fellow-statesman, at least he wanders for hours among the centenarian trunks of his

forests, scarcely more hardy and rugged than himself, with a fellow-feeling for their tested powers of endurance and resistance.

The Castle of Varzin lies in a beautiful silent park. It has been said that Berlin was an oasis dropped into a desert by a bird of prey; the same might be told of Varzin, for beyond its immediate surroundings the country is flat and barren. The house, built by a Count Gödevels, is a plain structure, the first owner caring little for beauty and less for expense. To the right is a conservatory leading out of the Prince's study; at the back lies a small lake among gaudy flower-beds, overlooked by a terrace, where the Prince can be seen walking backwards and forwards with his hands behind his back. The park was once a part of the forest stretching between Besswitz and Vassow. Not far distant is a large glass factory where a number of Austrian and Italian workmen are employed. When after the disastrous retreat from Russia the right wing of Napoleon I.'s army was marching through Dantzic and Lauenburg, a large number of soldiers deserted, seeking refuge in the woods, in lonely barns and even ovens,

where they remained concealed till they thought that all chance of being captured and shot was over ; having neither money nor clothes, they were compelled to seek service with the native land-owners, and from these men the glass-workers are descended.

Since Prince Bismarck has been the master of Varzin he has done much to improve it. He has himself created factories on the Wipper, a stream running through his estate and famed for its excellent trout ; the locality has become more populated in consequence, but it still retains a certain gloomy and sombre aspect of quasi-monastic austerity.

When the Chancellor is at Friedrichsruhe he exchanges the general's undress uniform, which he habitually wears, for a long civilian's coat and a soft hat of large dimensions and peculiar shape, manufactured especially for him by a Berlin hat-maker, whose address he once gave to the Prince of Wales. He conscientiously acts his part of Lord of the Manor, and enjoys the assumption ; he watches the cutting down of the trees, inspects the factories, stops before the cottages and labourers' sheds, talks with the

peasants, and as much out of policy as benevolence, assists them in their needs and professes interest in their welfare. He is a good practical farmer and an expert forester; his woods are well stocked with game, wild boars, deer, hares, and rabbits, which he used to shoot with the activity he puts to all things, but irregularly and capriciously. He has had to relinquish many of his outdoor pursuits since he became a martyr to neuralgia, suffering at times acutely; when these paroxysms attack him he grows in turn morose, desponding, violent, or melancholy, excited or a hypochondriac, complaining bitterly, and railing at fate; but at a sudden call of duty or business he rouses himself as if by magic from the deepest fit of depression, and rallying with surprising quickness is once more the clear-headed statesman, ready to think and act without counting the personal risk.

One day he had been in great pain, and sat cursing his destiny; his son-in-law tried to soothe him by reminding him that God had made him His instrument for the edification of a great nation.

"Yes," he answered, mournfully, "but at

what cost have I been permitted to do this thing! What sacrifices! Three wars, two hundred thousand men killed on the battle-fields! How many fathers and mothers, how many wives and sisters have shed bitter tears through me! I shall have to settle it all with God, but till then I have no peace—my life is all worry, care, and suffering.”

But as soon as he feels better, as soon as the neuralgia yields to remedies, when he is able to eat a good dinner and wash it down with the champagne his physician forbids him to touch, he is once again the great sceptic, the cynical philosopher, the indefatigable worker, the Olympian hero, who ignores weakness, understands no hesitation, and acknowledges but one idol—Germany.

There is only one crumpled rose-leaf in the sybaritic life of repose which the Chancellor would fain lead in the country, for a telegraphic line is laid between Varzin, Schoenhaußen, Friedrichsruhe, and the Wilhelmstrasse; it has been calculated that on an average one document leaves the *Reichskanzlei* in every three minutes, and that each one has been

inspected by Bismarck ; present or absent, he attends to business. In Berlin he works from the moment he rises—which is generally not before eleven—till he goes to bed, far into the small hours of the night. In the country he rides or walks in the afternoon, generally alone. Detectives patrol the woods, and keep strict watch over any stranger, or wayfarer not known as belonging to the locality.

The Prince does not scruple to refuse admittance point-blank to intruders, whatever their rank or credentials, when he is not disposed to receive them ; when he does, if they outstay their welcome he has his own system for getting rid of them. An Ambassador once asked him how he managed to end an interview.

“Perfectly easily,” answered Bismarck. “My wife knows pretty accurately when people prolong their visit beyond the proper time, and then she sends me a message that I am wanted.”

He had barely finished speaking when a footman knocked at the door, and informed his master that the Princess wished to speak to him. The diplomat, blushing and confused,

beat a hasty retreat, without stopping for the ordinary formalities of leave-taking.

Sometimes by stealth or perseverance a more successful visitor contrives to break through the defensive cordon of police and penetrate into the grounds; but M. de Bismarck, who works near a window overlooking the approach, hardly ever fails to see him in time to make good his escape through a secret door hidden in the panelling, and while he is being looked for, all over the house, disappears by a back way into the woods, where he remains long enough to wear out the patience of his would-be guest, who, tired at last of waiting, has no other alternative but to return discomfited to the village inn.

The first impression received on entering Friedrichsruhe is the coldness and meanness of the interior. The walls are distempered in a pale gray colour, relieved by no warmer decoration; the furniture of all the rooms occupied by the Bismarck family is severe to plainness. The Lacedemonian simplicity of Emperor William I. has been emulated by his Chancellor; the table at which he writes, the frames of his pictures,

the what-not at the foot of the Princess' bed, the chairs and sofas, all seem ostentatiously to proclaim that their owners are indifferent to comfort and ease, and condescend to luxury only in what appertains to official representation.

The Palace—for such it is called by some, Castle by others—is entered through a small hall; on the right is a cloak-room, on the left lives the house-steward. The audience chamber of the Prince faces the front-door, and is in size and appurtenances one of the least imposing of the house, although it contains two rather artistic mantelpieces. Near the door is a tall, quaint hat and umbrella stand; the trunk of an oak forms the pediment, surmounted by large antlers; it affords a resting-place for the unmistakable hat of the Prince, and for a collection of walking-sticks and canes; one is as much his inseparable companion as the big hound, Tyras, who, like the phoenix, never dies without reviving in a similar shape; another bears a silver plate recording that he carried it on the day of the battle of Koeniggratz. Close beside the stand is a small oaken table under a portrait of Lord Beaconsfield, taken from a

sketch made in 1878, and under which is his name written in red pencil by Bismarck. The companion picture is "M. Thiers," inscribed in the same hand, from the painting by M. Bonnat. No one knows if the two portraits, which are good likenesses, have been so placed by accident or design. Further on, raised on a low cupboard, is a life-size bust of Marshal Moltke, the pedestal almost entirely hidden by a thick wreath of laurel bound with a ribbon of the national colours. With the exception of another portrait of the witty Cardinal of Hohenlohe, and a small equestrian statue of Charlemagne, the furniture consists only of a stand for arms, a bookcase, a topographical map of Friedrichsruhe and a few others, two arm-chairs, and a round table near the window. An irritating want of taste and harmony pervades these arrangements; it is noticeable in every apartment affected to the master of the house; alone the rooms occupied by the Princess show a little more refinement and elegance.

On the left of the audience chamber is the study which used to be Count Rantzau's before he went to Munich; it offers nothing remark-

able, with the exception of a pencil likeness of Bismarck, an oil painting of Moltke, and a fine photograph of the commemorative picture of the Berlin Congress, painted by Anton von Werner. The apartments on the right show some improvement; the first is the Prince's library, containing a goodly collection of well-bound volumes behind glass doors. A glance at their titles reveals that they have not been selected by a book-lover or a *savant*, but by a man who, having scanty leisure for general reading, has brought together the works which are more essential for reference or consultation in his own especial line. Beyond the library is the Chancellor's study, with its atmosphere of grave, telling labour; the numerous tables are littered with papers and documents; there is evidence that the Prince works even when not seated at his desk, but pacing the floor, or resting on the sofa. He will have space and a south aspect; the warm brightness of the midday sun struggles to redeem the apartment from gloom and austerity, and lightens up the salient features of the room. The chair in which Bismarck writes has no back; his mahogany desk,

of unusual dimensions, is covered with a green cloth ; he uses thick quills, and blue sand instead of blotting-paper. On one side is a shelf for letters, on the other a longer one for more voluminous correspondence. In the corner near the window, facing him as he writes, is a small bureau over which hangs the portrait of William I. in plain clothes ; it dates from 1867, and was painted by Numa Blanc, in Paris, when the King of Prussia visited the French Exhibition ; not far from it is a splendid photograph of the Prince Imperial (the late Emperor Frederick) in the uniform of Cuirassiers, and a likeness in water-colours of "Prinz Wilhelm" (the present Emperor) on horseback as a hussar officer ; all are presents from the old Emperor to Bismarck. Two not very tasteful waste-paper baskets are offerings from female admirers. At the lower end of the room, behind the desk and tables, are some pieces of furniture, a sofa and arm-chairs, in which the Chancellor reclines at intervals to smoke and commune with his own thoughts. At some distance from the portraits and photographs of the Hohenzollerns is one of the Princess Bismarck, and over his writing-table are likenesses of Countess

Marie von Rantzau, and of his two sons, Herbert and "Bill." As he works he turns his back on his wife and faces his sovereign, unconsciously exemplifying his principle that "women must be silent in church and in politics."

Surrounded by those to whom he has pledged his loyalty, and by the few beings for whom family ties have awakened a responsive love, the Chancellor is able to confound in one and the same sentiment the only two affections of his life—his country and his family.

To conclude the inventory of a room which will be some day visited with the eager devotion of pilgrims at a shrine, and take its place with the historical apartments of Frederick the Great at Sans Souci, Louis XIV. at Versailles, and Voltaire at Ferney, it is necessary to mention a little mahogany card-table, the top of which doubles up; on the uppermost flap is inlaid a small brass plate bearing the following inscription :

"On this table were signed the preliminaries of peace between Germany and France on the 26th of February, 1871, at Versailles, Rue de Provence, No. 14."

When the flap is opened, the green cloth with which it is lined still shows the spots of candle-grease dropped over it on that eventful occasion. Prince Bismarck had some difficulty in becoming possessed of this table, which he had vainly attempted to buy. The lady to whom it belonged obstinately refused to part with it; the Chancellor, who is not easily baulked when he sets his heart either upon a piece of furniture or a province, ordered one to be made exactly similar, and then proposed the exchange of the old table for the new. The poor woman, considering it a profitable bargain, made no further objections, and nothing remained but to invest the acquisition with the recording plate.

Foreign Envoys and Ambassadors complain that they do not see Prince Bismarck in the Wilhelmstrasse; they are further still from him at Varzin and Friedrichsruhe; nevertheless, occasions will occur when the rule of exclusion is infringed, especially in the case of some diplomat whom a long residence in Berlin has made *persona grata* to a man who takes few likings and is very reticent in confessing to them; to such a one an invitation to Fried-

richsruhe is sometimes extended, and he enjoys the privilege of making the acquaintance of a courteous, affable host, very different from the soldierly statesman known to his colleagues.

His letter of invitation mentions the time at which he is expected; the Hamburg train reaches the private station on the estate about half-past nine p.m. and stops by special signal. Count de Rantzau used to await the visitor on the platform and take him in his father-in-law's carriage to the Schloss, where the whole family was assembled to welcome him, and the party at once sat down to a copious and excellent supper. When the Prince was not suffering from his old enemy, neuralgia, he remained with his guest till the hour of retiring for the night; when too ill to do so, he deputed some member of his household to escort the guest to the comfortable suite of rooms prepared for him, where a servant was in attendance to take his orders for the night and the following morning. An early breakfast was served to him in his private sitting-room, and about ten o'clock Prince Bismarck, having announced his arrival, came in, took a seat, and launched upon a conversa-

tion on public business which sometimes lasted two hours. The Chancellor's clearness, lucidity, frankness of speech, *abandon*, to use a word which has no English equivalent, were a constant source of astonishment to the visitor, who mentally compared his manner with the short, hurried, peremptory utterances at the *Reichskanzlei*. Sometimes in the middle of a sentence a sharp paroxysm of pain would cause the nervous fingers to press the cheek, but without interfering with the earnest and fluent speech.

The house party meets at a second breakfast or luncheon; after the meal the Prince takes his visitor for a walk round the grounds, talking pleasantly of his improvements, his trees, and flowers, as if these Arcadian topics were the only ones worthy of occupying his mind; a little later he deposes his son-in-law to do the honours of the truly seignorial forests, which afford such excellent sport, and where the Chancellor has proved himself a very Nimrod. Now he remarks with a shade of sadness that his shooting days are over. "Once upon a time," he said, "missing even a hare would have made me wretched—now I do not care to bring down a stag."

It is, however, after dinner, in the large, homely drawing-room, that Bismarck appears in all his genuine, unpretentious geniality. His two huge dogs, who never leave his side, look up into their master's deep-set eyes, mutely imploring the caress which is never withheld. The little Rantzaus, sturdy, handsome boys, who have taught the Prince *l'art d'être grand-père*, play fearlessly under his fond, proud look. They are very dear to him, and they know it. He has himself directed the system of their education, and while encouraging familiar freedom, he insists upon politeness to all, obedience to him, and courteous attentions to his guests. In that home atmosphere no indulgent husband, no devoted father, could show and receive more tender affection than the Man of Iron, at whose frown Europe trembles, and who shivers his foes like glass.

As the evening advances, and his pipe is nearly smoked out, he rises, and bidding his visitor farewell, leaves the room with his grandchildren and his dogs. Presently a light supper is served, and at eleven o'clock the Ambassador is taken back to the station and shown into a

special carriage ordered for him at Hamburg to convey him to Berlin.

The best portrait of M. de Bismarck is one taken by the painter Lembach. The artist surprised him one day at Varzin, his head raised, attentively watching a flight of storks; his absorbed contemplation gave him an expression of such concentrated thought that Lembach, drawing nearer to him, said: "Excellency, the thing is done," and setting to work immediately, made the remarkable likeness which is now hanging in the Museum of Berlin. There are several *replicas* of this painting—one made expressly for M. de Bleichröder, the great financier.

CHAPTER VI.

Count Herbert von Bismarck—Count “Bill” von Bismarck
—M. de Bleichröder—Dr. Schweningen—Marshal von
Moltke.

INVOLUNTARILY these reminiscences of Prince Bismarck revive memories of the men who, if distinguished in a lesser degree, have had at least sufficient merit to be drawn into the magic circle of his intimacy by that irresistible force of attraction that brings the satellite nearer and nearer to the planet. Had they remained further removed, they would undoubtedly have shone with a brighter individual lustre ; but illuminated by the reflected radiance of the greater light, it is probable that they have earned a longer and more lasting celebrity.

Count Herbert von Bismarck, M. de Bleichröder, and Dr. Schweningen are, for totally

different reasons, the three living persons whom the Chancellor sees most often ; and Berlin, if it has occasionally wondered at his choice, has yet accepted this preference, as it would accept any decision or caprice of him whom William I. has called "the great Manager of Germany." In the same spirit, no objection was raised in public when, in April, 1888, Prince Bismarck appointed his eldest son, Herbert, to the post of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, even with the apparent anomaly that, the Foreign Office being under the immediate control of the Chancellor, the son became virtually his father's colleague.

Count Herbert was born in December, 1849. He barely looks his age ; is a tall, well-built, broad-shouldered man, with fair hair ; he has the same inscrutable, but less penetrating, eyes as the Prince, and is endowed with splendid health and a vigorous constitution. When not in uniform, he might be taken indifferently for the cavalry officer he is, or for the sober Professor of some University ; he has the heavy moustache of the former, the thick hair and passive face of the latter. His glance is at times almost hard ; his resemblance to his father is vague and variable

as yet ; nevertheless it is already unmistakable, and it is apparent that every successive year will accent and develop it more forcibly. The actual shape of his eyes, nose, and chin is inherited, but the general expression is different, and the smooth face has not the deep, characteristic furrows that line the elder man's cheek and brow.

Like all his countrymen of a certain status, Count Herbert began life as a soldier, and has retained his rank although he entered the diplomatic service in 1874, making his *début* in the career as an attaché in Munich. He rose rapidly to the post of Secretary, went in that capacity to Switzerland and Dresden, and in 1881 was called back to the Foreign Office with the title of Councillor of Legation. It was at that epoch that the serious disagreement already alluded to between father and son regarding the beautiful and unfortunate Elizabeth von Hatzfeldt, Princess Karolath, threatened to create a lasting breach between them ; it ended in Count Herbert's surrender to the indomitable will of the Chancellor, who ruthlessly denied that passion could rule Count Herbert's future destinies. He intended

him to be, not a lovesick swain, but a faithful servant of his country, and in order to wean him from his regrets, at once set to work to mould him into a competent and useful auxiliary; he knew humanity well enough to feel certain that ambition was the surest cure of love, and that he had it in his power to realise the wildest dreams of that ambition.

Up to that date Count Herbert, during his stay in foreign cities, had learned only the lessons which the world teaches to a man of pleasure; henceforth it became his father's wish that he should perfect his political education in the higher spheres of diplomacy. From 1881 to 1885, either as Secretary of Embassy, Minister Plenipotentiary, or special Envoy, he visited all the large capitals of Europe, and in 1883 came to London. At that time no anxiety had yet been aroused by the health of the Prince Imperial, no foreboding existed of the fatal malady then already latent in his system, for it was only in 1886 that those near enough the throne to be well informed began to entertain the dread suspicions which a year later could no longer be concealed from the public. The partiality of the heir

to the Imperial throne towards England was, however, at the earlier date so acknowledged a fact, that Prince Bismarck resolved to send his son on a non-official mission to Great Britain in order to thoroughly acquaint himself with the English feelings, sympathies, and dispositions of the country for Germany. He has since often repeated his visits, made many friends, been welcomed alike in social and political circles, and become intimate with Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Rosebery, and Lord Londonderry, whose young daughter has more than once been mentioned as his possible bride.

In 1884, Count Herbert went to St. Petersburg, when for the second time a triple alliance had been concluded between Russia, Austria, and Germany. He met with a singularly warm and flattering reception, and found himself the object of the marked attentions of the handsomest ladies of the Court; but whether from modesty, indifference, or prudence, he remained apparently untouched by their freely expressed preference. A little later he was with his father at the interview of Skierniewicz, and the triple alliance having no further secrets for him, he did not return to St. Petersburg, but was sent on a secret

mission to Vienna, the purport of which was to renew the Austro-Hungarian Treaty of 1879.

Thus in the short space of twelve months, the Chancellor had initiated his son alike to the mysterious paths and broad highways of international diplomacy, and inoculated him with the political fever which was to sweep away the lingering fever of love. More and more confident in his powers, he sent him to the Hague, where the burning question of the succession to the Duchy of Luxembourg is eternally smouldering, and in 1885, judging him to have won his spurs, made him Under-Secretary of State. After the nomination of Count Hatzfeldt to the Embassy of London, Count Herbert became Minister, and was through the patronage of the Emperor Frederick promoted to the higher position of Member of the Council of State. It must not be forgotten that there is a double administration in Berlin, and a Government for the Kingdom of Prussia which is distinct from the Government of the Empire, and consequently requires an extra number of representatives.

There is but one important foreign capital in which Count Herbert has not made either

a lengthened or an official stay, and that is Paris; but he has, nevertheless, made the best use of the rare flying visits authorised on his way to, or from other posts. While the Ferry Ministry was in power he managed to spend some pleasant days in the French capital, dining more than once at the most renowned restaurants with the cleverest of young French politicians, who found him extremely agreeable; and he has been heard to say that he retains the most charming memories of these social gatherings.

The heavy responsibilities of his present post are in a certain measure made lighter for him, owing to his particular position with regard to the Chancellor, who, being President of the Council, Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Commerce for *Prussia*, holds both the interior and exterior policy in his hands. As he is supremely masterful and supremely intolerant, his colleagues are necessarily his subordinates, and almost invariably his tools.

His prodigious activity has literally used up several Secretaries of State. Herr von Bülow, who died in 1879, had been for some time so

exhausted physically, that he had been compelled to take a coadjutor in the person of Herr von Radowitz. His successor, Prince Hohenlohe, was worn out in six months. Count Hatzfeldt, endowed with greater powers of endurance, kept office from '81 to '85, but was at last obliged to take a well-earned rest, and obtained as an acknowledgment of his valuable services the appointment of Ambassador to the Court of St. James. Count von Bismarck is in the full prime of his manhood, trained to military discipline, inured to the strain and exertions of diplomatic life, and has the advantage of paternal advice and support, so that his chances of a long tenure of office are more favourable than those of his predecessors. The members of the Diplomatic Corps in Berlin are unanimous in their commendation of his courtesy, his frankness—natural or affected—and speak with wonder of his prodigious memory. He is more approachable than his father ever was, and at the same time it is felt that intercourse with him is in reality intercourse with the invisible fountain-head from which all inspiration springs. The Count's career has been brilliant and rapid

beyond expectation, but the Germans do not cavil at what elsewhere would be branded as nepotism; their Olympian hero can do no wrong, whether he creates his favourites or crushes his foes. It is highly improbable that Prince Bismarck should ever have revealed the innermost recesses of his mysterious mind to any living being, however closely connected with him by the ties of relationship or friendship, but it is possible to believe that he must at times have pondered grimly over the unsolved problem that he will leave behind him, with the colossal inheritance of a German unity to be preserved and kept intact against enemies abroad and enemies at home. It is therefore not unlikely that he cherishes the unspoken hope of vesting that sacred charge in his son, and that in associating Count Herbert with his labours he is creating a successor, training him to be his responsible inheritor, and buckling on with his own hands the tried armour in which he has cased himself for so many years, and which has enabled him to defy triumphantly the hundred-headed hydra ever ready to assail the Fatherland he has edified.

The Chancellor's youngest son, Wilhelm, always called "Bill," is quite different from his brother in appearance and disposition; he is shorter, stouter, cheerful, light-hearted, joyous, affectionate, and a *bon vivant*; he is a very good husband to the pretty little wife he married three years ago. He is remarkably free and outspoken, with a dash of humour, and from his boyhood was known for a certain recklessness and audacity much appreciated by his companions. When quite a lad, at the Werner Gymnasium, he was called upon, according to custom, to make an extempore speech upon a given subject; his comrades had more or less successfully disposed of their themes when his turn came. The President, intending to be particularly complimentary to Prince Bismarck, then at the apogee of his fame, said to the student:

"Now, my dear Bismarck, give us your views upon the greatest man of the present day—one whose name is on every lip, and on whom the eyes of Europe are fixed with wonder and admiration."

The boy bowed, and without a moment's hesitation or change of countenance, began gravely:

"Many years ago, in the Duchy of Posen, a child was born of poor but Jewish parents. That child is now Dr. Stromberg. . . ."

Undismayed by the start of the Professor, whose sycophantism was recoiling upon himself, encouraged by the ill-suppressed titter of the other scholars, he gravely proceeded with the eulogy of the wealthy financier, thus intimating his contempt for the snobbish flattery which attempted to make the son pronounce the panegyric of the father.

M. de Bleichröder, the Berlin Rothschild, can be seen almost every day in the Wilhelmstrasse, walking slowly in the direction of the Chancellor's palace, leaning on the arm of his confidential servant. For twelve years the millionaire has been all but totally blind, unable to guide himself without assistance or to look upon the evidences of wealth that surround him. With great difficulty, by means of a powerful lens fixed in one glass of the blue spectacles which constantly shade his eyes, he can at times manage to decipher a few written words, but the effort must not be long sustained or often re-

peated. The claim which M. de Bleichröder—who is also Consul General of Great Britain—has upon Prince Bismarck is the same which to the last was recognised by the old Emperor William. At the beginning of the Franco-German war, foreseeing what a prolonged struggle the fight between the two nations would be, financier enough to calculate the cost, and to realise that capital alone could enable his country to carry on the contest till the enemy's resources were exhausted, animated by the purest patriotic abnegation, the banker placed the whole of his already considerable fortune at the disposal of his King, to be spent for the interests of the nation and the army. William and Bismarck both represented to him that his accumulated hoards would run great risks. "I know it," answered M. de Bleichröder, nobly; "but if the Fatherland is defeated I do not want to be rich; if it triumphs, I want to have contributed my share to its success."

Events have rewarded this generous conduct; neither the Court nor the presiding genius of the Government have been ungrateful, and the position of the Jewish millionaire is

unique and unassailable. Secret ties exist between M. de Bleichröder and Bismarck, into which no alien eye is allowed to pry ; the banker is the statesman's financial agent, and receives private instructions which have more than once floated or swamped an international loan or enterprise ; he has his hand on the political pulse of Europe, and it is such an averred fact that he is the best informed man in Berlin that he is courted and consulted as an authority. His chief prestige in the eyes of the public is that he sees M. de Bismarck nearly every day ; it is not only out of politeness that foreign diplomats call on him, or that German ambassadors hasten to meet him when he passes through the towns to which they are accredited ; they recognise him as a power, and believe him to be cognisant of the intentions of the Chancellor, for whom he openly professes a deep veneration. He has never made a secret of his entire devotion to Bismarck, a devotion which, to those unacquainted with his origin and his character, may appear servile, but which is loyal and genuine ; it must be said, to his credit, that he has never asked a favour from his all-powerful patron, or claimed a reward

when he has been successful in bringing to a good end some delicate negotiation entrusted to him as much by implication as by categorical instructions. The shrewd business man has more than once divined, by an almost miraculous intuition, the unexpressed desires of the statesman, and at times assumed responsibilities which it did not suit the latter to acknowledge.

M. de Bleichröder has two sons and one daughter; the former are his partners. The girl lately made an unfortunate marriage; love on her side, greed on the part of the man who won her affections with no other purpose than to secure the million which was her dowry, and treated her so cruelly, so ungenerously, that she easily obtained the divorce she claimed four months after her wedding day. Her father entertains millionaires, ambassadors, the members of a great congress, and princes, but he has no friends and no home life. It is pathetic and inexpressibly sad to see the blind old man pass with his hesitating halting step through the long suite of his sumptuous rooms, filled with priceless pictures and furniture, to watch him after a dinner party offer his arm to a lady

guest, who is in reality his guide, and taking her through the brilliantly lit apartments, stop almost at random and point out with his trembling finger some painting of enormous value which he has bought but never looked at; if he likes his companion, he goes further and further till he reaches the smallest of the rooms, that have all the cold, stately, uninhabited gorgeousness of a show place, and suddenly becoming more certain of his bearings he walks straight up to two cages on a stand, containing a canary and a bullfinch; with a smile he lifts the velvet cover and whistles softly. The birds, roused from their sleep, respond at once, and in that exchange of chirping sounds between the sightless master and the little fluttering creatures with their glad welcome of his voice, lies the first bond of honest natural human sympathy so conspicuously absent in the remainder of that gilded solitude.

M. de Bleichröder is hospitable and generous; he ransacks his hot-houses, the finest in Prussia, to heap rare flowers on the plate of the women he invites; in his half-deprecating, half-coaxing manner he urges them to taste the dainties

which he knows compose the *menu*, and which have to be cut up on his own plate by his valet. He neither repines nor complains, and once said to his neighbour :

"I see nothing, enjoy nothing ; but if I was told that I could recover my sight at the price of not having done for my country what I have tried to do in these last twelve years, I would refuse, preferring to be blind."

He is liberal and just; he has given a Roman Catholic hospital a thousand pounds as readily as he has endowed public institutions; his charity is discriminating as well as extensive; he distributes large sums, and has pensioners whose susceptibility he spares, and whose thrift he encourages, by letting them believe that they earn a salary instead of receiving alms. There is one old cobbler from whom he orders three pairs of unwearable shoes a year, keeping up the fiction that he requires them. He is assailed with demands for money, and has been the victim of unscrupulous cupidity. The man who controls the markets of Europe has been cheated like a child, and deceived like a novice by false tales of fictitious misery. Through his Semitic

origin he has incurred the dislike which the Germans continue to show to the Jews; by his fortune he has made enemies, and by the high esteem in which Bismarck holds him, excited envy. Vassili, in his clever but unfair and cynical book of the "*Société de Berlin*," wrote that society was divided into those who do not visit Bleichröder and laugh at him, and those who visit him and laugh at him all the same. He can easily afford to turn the laugh, if it existed, against them. His position is now too well assured to be ever shaken; but it was a poignant grief to him when the whole corps of officers decided to have no further relations with him or his, after a glaring offence against good taste committed by one of his sons, an officer himself at the time of the assault of Nobiling that placed the Emperor's life in danger. The young man was flushed with wine, walking abroad in undesirable company, and irritated at the crowds before the palace which impeded his progress and that of his companion, said half aloud: "Well, if the Emperor is wounded, what of that?" He was sentenced by the tribunal of honour, the unimpeachable *Wehm Gericht* of the army, to send in his resignation, and his

sister was never asked to dance by any man wearing a uniform. At Court balls, the Emperor always commanded some of his guardsmen to select her for a partner; they would, in obedience to an order that could not be disputed, take her round the room in absolute silence, bow and retire, till it became unbearable for Mademoiselle de Bleichröder to go into society. The scoundrel who married her—a gentleman in name only—has, however, by the mere fact of the marriage raised the ban, and as his divorced wife she can, if she chooses, take her *revanche* of past and unmerited slights.

By another singular anomaly, M. de Bleichröder, a welcome guest at Court, a daily visitor of the Chancellor's, is not intimate with the Bismarck family. The Princess is reserved and distant with him and never asks him to her private dinners, while Dr. Schweningen is hardly ever absent from her board, and yet both men are equally indispensable to her husband.

The reputation of the physician is, apart from his connection with the Chancellor, founded on the assumption that he has discovered a treatment by which obesity, the bugbear of the

lazy and the rich, the haunting terror of men who ride and women who flirt, can be conquered. Dr. Schweninger is a man of about thirty-three or four, a Bavarian by birth, and with his blue-black beard and set marked features, bears an unflattering resemblance to a Polish nihilist. His piercing dark eyes are protected by spectacles, either from some weakness of sight or from a wish to shroud their penetration from too close inspection. Uniformly dressed in black, wearing his coat buttoned to his chin, he is an easily recognisable and well-known *Erscheinung*, to use a German idiom, looked upon with a not yet waning interest on account of his present fame, and even more so on account of the revelations in his past life which were made public at a sitting of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies some four years ago.

Schweninger was a university chum of Count "Bill" Bismarck, and even at the termination of their term the young men kept up a desultory sort of acquaintance. When the latter found out that enormous quantities of Bavarian beer could not be consumed without impairing the symmetry of a cavalry officer's proportions, he

applied to his quondam comrade for a remedy against his growing *embonpoint*. Schweningen put him under a treatment and recommended a diet which reduced the weight of young Bismarck by sixty pounds in four months. The Chancellor was then at Carlsbad, trying what the waters would do for him with the same object in view, but not deriving great benefit from his cure; hearing the enthusiastic praises of Schweningen loudly sung by his son, he consented, at his instigation, to send for the young doctor. Unabashed by the rank and majesty of his patient, he coolly put him through an exhaustive professional examination. Bismarck, always impatient of any interrogatory, soon wearied of these searching questions, and flatly declared he would not answer any more.

"Very well," calmly replied Schweningen; "but if you do not want to be questioned, you had better send for a veterinary."

The Chancellor remained for a moment dumb with astonishment at this audacious retort, and then said grimly :

"If you are as skilful as you are impertinent, young man, you must be a great physician."

In this way commenced the relations which from regard soon ripened into affection on the Chancellor's side, and have endured so persistently. At the instigation of his great patron, Schweninger settled in Berlin; he is not allowed to let a day pass without visiting him; has his seat always ready at the family table; travels with the Princess, who has adopted him as a friend; and at every home festival or anniversary, one of the sons never fails to rise and propose the doctor's health.

Such unprecedented favouritism inevitably excited envy and jealousy; and those who could least brook to see a stranger installed in the Chancellor's good graces determined to imperil his position. The Prince was asked by officious friends whether he was acquainted with the antecedents of the man admitted to his intimacy, and they proceeded to lay before him a narrative of the doctor's life. According to their statement, Schweninger had spent four months in a Munich prison when he was twenty-one. A medical student at the time, he had been vaguely accused, with several others, of robbing a churchyard of dead bodies and limbs for anatomical purposes, these outrages

having of late become so frequent as to excite considerable attention. Schweninger, beside himself at this unmerited charge, which he fancied he could trace to the custodian of the cemetery, publicly called him a liar and a drunkard, and threatened to break every bone in his body. The man, in his turn, swore to be revenged on the student at the first opportunity. It soon offered. The custodian was going his rounds late one night, when he suddenly came upon a man bending over a tombstone in a remote and shadowy corner of the churchyard; the rays of his lantern revealed Schweninger. He sprang upon him, convinced he had caught the body-snatcher red-handed at last, when, to his astonishment, he discovered that the student was not alone. A woman was with him, who hastily fled in terror, but not so fast that he did not recognise the wife of a well-known professional gentleman of Munich. The scandal caused by this adventure was enormous; the husband sued for a divorce, which he eventually obtained, the lawyer who had been his wife's counsel marrying her shortly after. At the trial, Schweninger stoutly denied any guilt or criminal intent; how-

ever, in the course of the cross-questioning to which he was submitted he apparently lost his head—perhaps in the fear of immediate dismissal from the Medical School—and got up a cock-and-bull story, which met with little credence. He averred that the co-respondent had been his patient, that he had been urging her to try some new treatment, and that solely in obedience to her reiterated commands he had agreed to meet her at night in the cemetery to unfold the whole system to her. He was put upon his oath, and swore to the truth of his statement. The testimony of the custodian, equally put on *his* oath, flatly contradicted Schweninger's. The affair was referred to a tribunal of honour, and the judge had to decide between the credibility of the two parties. When the student found himself at this bar—to him far more imposing than an ordinary law court—his assurance wavered, and he admitted at last that he had perjured himself, for which offence he was condemned to nine months' imprisonment—afterwards commuted to four—and at the expiration of his sentence was banished from Bavaria and disqualified in future for the exercise of his profession in his own country.

Such was the record of the man whom Bismarck had trusted. He listened to the accusation without vouchsafing any comment; he had all the documents relating to the prosecution forwarded to him from Munich, examined them closely, was convinced that the bill against his physician had been a true one in many respects, and—altered nothing in his attitude towards him. About the year 1884, Schweningen had just pulled the Chancellor through an unusually severe attack of illness, and was asked what he wanted as a token of appreciation for his unremitting care.

“Rehabilitate me entirely, Prince,” he answered, “by making me a Professor of the University of Berlin.”

No professorship happened to be vacant at the time, but it is the Emperor's privilege to be able to create an additional one, and one only. That boon Bismarck resolved to obtain for his candidate, and as William I. rarely refused him anything, the place was made, and Schweningen appointed to fill it. Then the long suppressed clamour of the learned bodies of the empire burst forth — the Professors

protested *en masse*, appealing to the laws of the land, which excluded from nomination any man whose past life bore a dishonourable stigma. The case was brought before the Reichstag; the sitting was stormy and memorable, the interpellations pregnant; the protection extended by Bismarck to his nominee weighing heavily, however, against precedent and written law.

At last Minister von Gossler, Secretary of State for Public Instruction, Medical and Ecclesiastical Affairs, rose, and in an eloquent speech acknowledged the plausibility of the objections alleged against Schweninger's nomination to a professorship of the University, and did not deny the unfortunate incidents, the errors and their consequences of which he had been found guilty. "But," he concluded, in a brilliant peroration, "that same man whom you condemn has restored our Chancellor's health—how do you propose to reward him?"

Deafening cheers received these words, and Schweninger was appointed Professor of Medicine at the University of Berlin.

However, not a single student was present at his first lecture; when, according to custom,

he sent his cards to the senior Professors, they were not returned ; when he ventured to leave them on their wives, they were contemptuously sent back to him. But Schweningen conquered by the mere force of his skill and learning ; one by one all the students rallied around him, and from every part, not only of Germany but of the whole world, patients came to his door, paying a fabulous price for his opinion. The Court summons him, Bismarck believes in no other physician, and yet, socially speaking, he is still a pariah. With the exception of the palace of the Wilhelmstrasse, he has a familiar footing in no Berlin house. He is content, however, to take things as they are, and to trust to the future. He sees his reputation grow daily ; he counts his patients by thousands ; he feels the strong support of the Chancellor to back him ; he is young still, and has a whole lifetime to overcome prejudice and to fight the ghost of past and regrettable indiscretions with the honourable weapons of his science and his skill.

Dr. Schweningen is very strict with his patients as regards the observance of his pre-

scriptions. He has cut off Prince Bismarck's champagne, and curtailed his *menu* to one or two courses only. The article of food he chiefly recommends is fish, and to it he attributes much of the success of his anti-fat treatment. He is the first to enter the Chancellor's room every morning, and is present at his breakfast. He certainly has brought him cleverly through several severe and dangerous attacks, and watches over him with a devotion which is not solely professional.

Count Gortchakof conjures up Bismarck; Bismarck evokes Moltke. Try as you may, the trilogy is so indivisible that it is impossible to separate its component parts while looking back on the second half of the century. The Marshal's tall spare form steps in silently between the burly frames of the two statesmen, and his piercing blue eyes, cold as blue eyes alone know how to be, send their clear glance, like a flash of steel, across the assembled Parliaments and the decisions of Congress.

It is a matter of history nowadays that the trembling senile hand of Germany's first Emperor held in its grasp ever-increasing forces ;

that in the space of twenty-eight years he had doubled the effective strength of his hosts; the names of the generals and commanders of his troops are for ever coupled with the Homeric battle-fields of the Franco-German war; Pape, Kleist, Du Bourg—who accompanied the French soldiers to Mexico as Military Attaché—Wartensleben, Blumenthal, the Royal Princes of Prussia and Saxony, and others surrounding the severe heroic figure of Moltke, have all won their grades in active, perilous service.

The whole world knows the history of the Marshal's career, and how it began in Denmark. Whoever has once seen him can never forget the clean-shaven face, the sharp, clever profile, the minute network of deep wrinkles furrowing the sunken cheeks and firm chin; the tall figure eternally buttoned up in a uniform whose seams are allowed to grow white by long usage, and from the breast of which the "Iron Cross" is never removed; a perfect embodiment of military rectitude and military duty. Always grave and serious, his mouth seems too rigid ever to unbend in laughter; even a smile appears inconsistent on that weatherbeaten countenance. He is the

modern soldier, scientific and theoretical, practical and reflective, active and authoritative, who conceives infallible plans of campaign and executes them.

When he is at Berlin, he occupies an official suite of rooms in the great new building of the *Etat Major*, erected not far from the statue of Victory—made of the cannon taken from the enemy, in commemoration of Sedan. In this enormous edifice of red brick, pierced with countless tall windows, barrack-like and cold, the Marshal's apartments, situated at the end of a long corridor, resemble a bivouac in their summary installation; the sitting-rooms contain only a table and a few chairs; the bedroom is as plain and bare as a soldier's tent. Moltke is not rich—lands and money were the awards showered on Bismarck—*his* services were paid in orders and military titles. He has no children, but the family of his nephew, who is his aide-de-camp and his heir, live with him. The young Countess von Moltke tries her best to enliven the austerities of her home, but gaiety does not readily acclimatise itself in that stern interior, where few strangers are admitted. The children

dine every day with their "uncle grandpapa," as they are taught to call the Marshal; but they are trained also to subdue their voices, and make no noise. On Sundays only they are allowed to ride a tall rocking-horse in the dining-room, and then the old man watches with impenetrable face and grave attention the games of the only living beings he cares for. Humanity counts for nothing in his estimation. "War is necessary, war is good," he once said, and he firmly believes it.

It is pleasanter to follow the great strategist away from the scene of his thoughtful labours to the comparative repose of his beloved country house, Creisnau in Silesia, whither he hurries whenever he can be spared from his post—more frequently now since the death of the aged Emperor, who could not well endure his absence. William I. to the last liked to be surrounded by the faithful servants of his throne, who had grown old at his side and in his service.

Creisnau is a square, pseudo *Renaissance* house, and with the same suggestion of being military quarters. At the entrance of the courtyard stands an oak, planted in 1870; at the

foot a block of granite bears the following inscription, "Sedan I. IX. 1870;" the tree is flanked by two cannons taken at Soissons and presented to the Marshal by the Emperor. A broad flight of steps leads to the house, which contains a number of spacious rooms, all equally devoid of the common appurtenances of luxury and modern comfort; there are no hangings, no pictures, no carpets, no couches, no easy-chairs; here and there some ornaments, of the usual order of presentation gifts: a bronze statue of William I. bestowed by himself, an equestrian one of the Marshal offered by the *General Stab* to its chief, busts of Frederick the Great and of all the other European monarchs, and in a corner one of Napoleon III., crowned with laurels, given in 1867.

Moltke adores Creisnau because it is his own creation. When he enlarged the property in 1871 it was in a shocking state of neglect; it is now one of the finest in the province. He laid out the park, which is remarkably fine, and affords him an inexhaustible source of amusement during the summer vacation. He is burgomaster of his commune, knows all his

dependents, tenants, and co-parishioners by name, addresses them with the familiar "thou," marries them civilly, and never fails to make a speech to each couple before dismissing them. He may feel inclined to retire from his high offices, but he will never cease to remain a burgomaster. In Germany no man who is well off and well born, who is intelligent, a public servant or a private gentleman, thinks himself absolved from exercising over his compatriots, as far as lies in his power, a direct influence, and considers it part of his mission to assist his inferiors in the management of their affairs by a direct participation in them which enables him to advise or remonstrate. Germany is still, *par excellence*, a feudal country, and the strong natural ties between the upper and lower classes, between land-owners and land-tillers, have not yet been loosened in any perceptible degree.

The Marshal rises early, and with military precision is at once dressed for the day; after taking his cup of coffee at seven he works till ten, and then sallies forth, a pruning knife in one hand, a cane fitted with a saw in the other, and with firm gait and erect carriage, inde-

fatigable in spite of his eighty-eight years, he wanders in the woods and grounds of Creisnau, lopping off a branch here, uprooting a dead plant there, and giving directions to his gardeners and his labourers. No stress of weather keeps the old veteran indoors; he has never carried an umbrella in his life, the uttermost concession he deigns to make to a drenching shower is to lift the collar of his overcoat around his ears. In whatever direction his walks may lead him, his steps invariably turn once a day to a grassy mound at the furthest end of the park. There his wife lies buried, she was the only woman who has ever caused his heart to beat, he mourned her sincerely and faithfully; and there unseen, the man who appears so far above every weakness of human tenderness drops at each visit, before he moves away with an added gravity on his stern features, a flower or leaf upon her grave.

The primitive hour of one assembles the little household to dinner. Moltke abhors long meals, and as soon as he has hurried over his, he lights a cigar and retires to his study to rest for an hour while reading the newspapers.

In the afternoon he drives—always in an open carriage—and after the seven o'clock frugal supper and a little chat with his grand-nephews, sits down to the real enjoyment of his day, a round of whist; he plays extremely well, and cannot successfully conceal a little vexation when he loses, more from the disinclination to be beaten than from any other cause, for the stakes are ridiculously small. On Sunday he attends the church of Graedenitz, usually walking both ways. He eats little, drinks no wine, but takes an inordinate quantity of snuff from a particular snuff-box that never leaves him, although he owns a goodly collection of costlier ones.

The relations between Prince Bismarck and Count von Moltke have always been friendly without being cordial: they are based more on mutual regard than sympathy. The statesman could ill have endured a rival in power, but he felt the want of a great strategical mind, and of a fearless arm as the minister of his will; having found both in the Marshal it behove him to remain on good terms with that invaluable ally; however, the strongest link between them has been their common affection for

the old Emperor, an affection differently understood by each. Bismarck loved the person of the sovereign, Moltke revered in him a Chief. The Marshal has a real or acquired indifference for the incense of applause and the tumult of noisy demonstrations; the *réclame* of publicity does not touch him; his simplicity has been called affectation, but erroneously so, for what he was in his obscure youth he is still in his glorious old age; he has not changed during his sixty-six years of active service. His reserve is instinctive, his unvarying calm is constitutional; he never gets angry, he hates no one, he unbends to none; he has, for the human race in general, the unconscious contempt of absolute strength.

He writes well, clearly, elegantly even; his "Letters on the East" are models of style; but as even in the most implacable and adamant natures there must be a soft vulnerable point, however hidden and deep-seated, Germany's passionless soldier, who looks upon the universe as a great field of manœuvres, loves flowers and sunshine like a girl.

He has grown very deaf of late, and never

takes part in the debates of the Reichstag, where he sits below Prince Bismarck. When the Chancellor speaks he always rises and remains standing till the end of the address, as if involuntarily obeying an unconscious sentiment of respect. Count Moltke only breaks his silence if the army requires defending, and therefore has few opportunities of opening his lips.

Since the death of William I., the General Field Marshal has withdrawn more and more into himself; he thinks, no doubt, that he has done enough for his country, that the present atmosphere of the Court is too keen for his old age, that a quicker blood courses in the veins of the sovereign, and that he has earned the right to leave the battle-field on which he has gathered so many laurels, to a younger generation eager to reap their own harvests.

CHAPTER VII.

The Prince of Naples—The King and Queen of Italy—
Archduke Rudolph of Austria—His death—Emperor
Francis Joseph.

AT the solemn funeral service of the Dom of Berlin, in March, 1888, were present, among a host of kings and princes, the heirs presumptive of the greatest thrones in Europe, bringing their last homage to the old sovereign who had filled the century with his personality; they were: Prince William of Hohenzollern, the Prince of Wales, the Czarevitch, the Archduke Rudolph of Austria, and the Prince of Naples. Perhaps the two striplings representing Russia and Italy attracted more attention than their seniors. Of the latter, one has ascended the throne; another is the well-known, genial English gentleman, who wins golden opinions wherever he shows himself;

and the third has carved for himself an important part in the affairs of his country.

The youthful and delicate-looking Prince of Naples was then only eighteen, and looked almost younger. It was his first responsible public appearance, with the exception of the time when the Emperor Frederick, visiting Italy as Prince Imperial, lifted him, a mere child, in his arms and showed him to the people, who acclaimed their sovereigns and their guest. He created an excellent impression ; his youthful shyness and natural diffidence were more than counterbalanced by a sweet seriousness and gentle dignity, which sat well on the only descendant of a noble and ancient house. The idolised son of his mother, he has inherited from her the charm of manner that won from her loving subjects the name of "Pearl of Savoy ;" from his father, a rectitude and unswerving integrity, which are not the least characteristics of his race. The King, who has a vast deal of common sense, insisted on the strong practical elements of his education ; the Queen, by her presence and solicitude, invested it with a soft poetical grace. He had foreign nurses and an

excellent English governess in his childhood, the best masters as he grew older; he could speak three languages fluently when other children barely lisp their own, and, far from being indulged because he was heir to a throne, he was early taught that less immunities and greater efforts were his lot in life. Good examples have not been wanting; from his babyhood, he has seen his parents conscientiously fulfilling their duties, sacrificing their tastes and their inclinations to the exigencies of Royalty, forsaking their well-beloved Monza, the most perfect residence in the fertile plains of Lombardy, to visit in rotation Turin, Florence, Rome, and Naples; and in each city, in each province, making their name respected and their sovereignty revered.

Prince Victor Emmanuel worships his beautiful mother, and the ties that unite them are closer and more tender than is often the case even in a private domestic circle; unbounded confidence exists in their intercourse, spontaneous on one side, unexact on the other; they understand each other with a word, a look, a mute pressure of the hand, and when their eyes meet they have a touching, tender glance

which is almost a caress. Queen Margherita has had the courage not to spoil her son by over-indulgence; she has carried out, or allowed her husband's system to be carried out, and by her judicious maternal training has developed the scrupulous truthfulness and respect for his word which the King so highly prizes. The little Prince has given many instances of his steadfast loyalty and affection for his mother; insignificant little traits, perhaps, but showing sufficiently of what stuff he is made.

Once, at home, when he could not have been much more than seven years old, he was called into the drawing-room after dinner, and told to go and speak with the Italian Ambassador at Berlin, Count de Launay, who was on a visit to his parents. He advanced at once and shook hands; the Count immediately attempted to draw him into conversation; the child, who, however, did not seem in the least shy, smiled prettily, nodded his answers, but never opened his lips, whether he was addressed in French or Italian. The Queen, after repeatedly ordering him to talk and finding him still mute, a little sternly gave the order for his removal. He

retired silently, obediently, his eyes filling with unshed tears at his mother's evident displeasure. Late that same evening she came, as was her wont, to bid him good-night. He threw himself into her arms, sobbing and crying: "Oh, do not be angry, and tell Count de Launay I was not rude or naughty; but it is Sunday, and you made me promise the other day that I would speak only English on Sundays, and *he* would talk nothing but French or Italian."

His allowance of pocket-money in those days was so small that it would have excited the derision of any moderately well-tipped school boy; but the King had so willed it, making, moreover, a rule that he should husband his weekly income so as never to exceed his budget. Grandly generous in all his dealings with others, Umberto practises, as far as he is personally concerned, a praiseworthy self-denial; by strict economy and judicious retrenchments he has been able to pay off the heavy debts which King Victor Emmanuel left behind him, and cleared the memory of the *Galantuomo* from the posthumous reproach of improvident extravagance. The Prince of Naples, conscientious in

this as in all things, had never been in debt, nor did the child ever complain of being stinted in his little allowance. At one time the Queen noticed that he left off making any purchases, that he refused to buy a somewhat costly toy which he had long coveted, although she had suspected him of hoarding his pocket-money for that purpose. She forbore to question him, till one day he asked her what the price of a silk gown was. On receiving an approximate answer, he emptied the contents of his money-box in his mother's lap, saying :

“I don't think there is quite as much ; but if you will let me go out on foot one morning, and go alone into a shop, I can bargain for a dress and get it cheaper ; and I do so want to buy one for my nurse, who won't have to wait any longer.”

In the same way he would sacrifice his childish fancies to buy a present for the Queen, more especially when he went with her to Courmayeur, in the picturesque Aosta valley, during the summer, where he enjoyed greater freedom and more of her company. There the mother and son live happily and quietly at the

Hotel Royal, an inn of small pretensions and less comfort, which the Queen has patronised for two or three seasons, because its chief recommendation in 'her eyes is that it faces the glorious prospect of mountain' scenery, and can be reached without passing through the little town. She leaves her jewels and matchless toilettes behind her in the cities, and walks abroad all day dressed in a short serviceable woollen gown and a plain straw hat, talking unrestrainedly with her lady-in-waiting and her aide-de-camp, while the Prince, strengthened and exhilarated by the Alpine air, is as bright, active, and joyous a lad as ever spent his holidays five thousand feet above the level of the sea

His first *gouverneur* was Colonel Osio, formerly Military Attaché to the Embassy at Berlin, and that officer is still with him now. It was an excellent choice, the Colonel being not only a man of great merit, but of high moral authority. He has acquitted himself of his charge with conscientious ability. He was accused by some of undue severity, but the strong affection his pupil bears him shows the accusation to have been groundless. In the

earlier days of their companionship, when the boy had successfully accomplished some difficult task which he had not been allowed to lay aside, he would bring it to his instructor, and, watching his face anxiously, say :

“Colonel, are you pleased with your little Prince?”

Even now he frequently refers to him, seeks his advice, and values his approval.

The Prince of Naples is below the middle height, but he has not done growing. His physical development was slow, while his mental one was unusually rapid. His hair is fair, his complexion pale, his eyes blue and soft; he bears a striking resemblance to his maternal grandfather, King John of Saxony, and has few of the more characteristic features of the House of Savoy. His memory is remarkable in so young a man; his favourite study is history. Few princes in Europe, whatever their age, are as thoroughly master of the involved history of the Middle Ages; he knows in all its details the complicated part played by Italy at that period, and he has, in elucidation and complement to his researches, begun a collection of

medals and coins which bids fair to become very interesting.

In 1886 the King sent him on an extended travelling tour which lasted a twelvemonth. This journey was not undertaken merely for pleasure, but had a more serious import; it was his father's wish that he should see with his own eyes what was going on in foreign countries, be initiated to the workings of other Governments, and under enlightened guidance form his own judgment, enlarge his views, and by gaining personal experience fit himself to become in his turn a ruler of men. Those who know best say that he has more than fulfilled the expectations of King Umberto; that on his return to Rome the stripling had become a man, matured in mind and gravely impressed with the magnitude of his future responsibilities; having lost, however, nothing of the gentle, submissive charm which is so endearing to his mother.

It is not the King's wish that the Prince should remain too long under tutelage. A palace is being built for his separate occupation; so that he may enfranchise himself from the un-

conscious thralldom of the Quirinal, and be encouraged in habits of independent thought and action. The Queen has consented—as she would to anything her husband thinks best—albeit with a regretful sense that her boy is no longer all her own. She has a deep sense of her obligations and duties, and is ever ready to relinquish her own wishes if they clash with political or diplomatic claims. For instance, not long ago it had been her great desire to be present in Dresden at the marriage of her cousin, Princess Joséphe of Saxony; she had manifested her intention of so doing, and made all her preparations to start for Germany with her mother, the Duchess of Genoa, daughter of the King of Saxony. But King Umberto disapproved of the journey; the Emperor of Austria was bidden to the wedding, and as he had not yet returned the visit of the King of Italy to Vienna, complications might arise which it was wise to avoid. Queen Margherita pleaded her relationship to the bride.

“You are her cousin, it is true,” answered the King, “but you are also Queen of Italy, which is more.”

Without further demur, the "Queen of Italy" gave up her projected visit.

The Quirinal is one of the smallest of the many Royal palaces of Italy; under the Papacy it was only used for a short time during the summer, and when Rome became the capital of the new kingdom, King Umberto was obliged to build an additional residence in the gardens, called the *Palazzino*, to accommodate the Duchess of Genoa, his mother-in-law; Queen Maria Pia of Portugal, his sister; Prince Thomas, the Queen's brother; the Duc d'Aosta, and other members of the Royal family when they were his guests in the Eternal City. However, these visits have always been few and short; it would seem as if the scions of the old Catholic House of Savoy, the once loyal supporters of the Church, felt ill at ease under the sombre and reproachful shadow of the Vatican. Yet the Queen does not care for the Pitti at Florence—it is too large, too public, more a museum than a home; the huge accumulation of artistic treasures, on which countless generations from all climes come to gaze, oppresses and saddens her. Under the

roof that shelters them it appears to her that there is no room for that happy *vie d'intérieur* of which she is so honestly fond; she feels more removed from her husband and her child, perhaps also from her poor. The best dressed woman in Italy is not only a loving wife and a tender mother, but a warm-hearted benefactress of the suffering and afflicted; her charity is not carelessly dispensed; she personally investigates the cases that seem deserving of assistance, and when assured that they are genuine sends prompt relief. She enters sympathetically into the tastes and occupations of the King, and is proud of his loyal, enduring admiration for her. The beautiful Margherita is still the loadstar of his existence.

Umberto impersonates and perpetuates in most things the traditions of his father, steering clear of the least praiseworthy of his idiosyncrasies. Without being as determined a huntsman, he loves active, daring sport. He repairs—when ever he can do so without prejudice to State business—to the Piedmontese Alps, where he hunts the chamois. Generally, he makes his head-quarters on the Piano del Re, a plateau

7,400 feet above the level of the sea. He has had a little rustic, one-storeyed building erected there, not much bigger than a hut, where he can spend the night. During the season the outer walls are hung with the carcasses of as many as fourteen or fifteen chamois at a time, all fallen to his gun. Close by are tents and sheds containing large stoves and some cooking utensils used to prepare the Royal meals; the keepers and beaters are invited to take shelter by the huge fires, to cook their invariable national food, the *polenta*, or maize flour, and to seek refuge against the excessive cold of those altitudes.

Within the last fifteen or twenty years the chamois have shown a great tendency to disappear, and when they became more and more rare, strict laws were made for their preservation as well in the Engadine and the Grisons as in Piedmont, and the penalties of contravention were strictly enforced. The rough dwellers on the mountain-side of Piano del Re and of the neighbouring valleys still relate with grim enjoyment a story of which Victor Emmanuel was the unwilling hero.

The King had inadvertently shot a female

chamois ; a municipal guard happened to be on the spot, saw the animal fall, traced the shot to the solitary sportsman, whom he did not recognise, took him by the arm and conducted him to the nearest *Bureau*. The functionary in charge, equally ignorant of the prisoner's status, having heard the accusation, proceeded to demand his name and quality.

"Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy," quietly answered the defendant.

The municipal guard fell on his knees, begging pardon, the functionary was profuse in his apologies ; but the King, turning to the former, said gravely :

"Get up, my good fellow, and always do your duty. The shot of a king does as much harm as the shot of a poacher. Only as I think it unnecessary to take this case before a communal tribunal, here are five hundred francs for the fine, five hundred for my rifle, which you have confiscated and which I beg you to give me back, and five hundred for yourself. *Contaccio*, you have earned them."

An officer of his suite, who had by this time joined him, looked as if he considered this

prodigality misplaced. The King, guessing at his thoughts, said as he walked away with him :

“My victim costs me dear, eh? But after all, fifteen thousand francs is dirt cheap. Had the creature lived, she would have had two fawns this year, and these little ones multiplying in their turn—well, I am not good at figures, but a mathematician would tell you that my erring shot has despoiled these mountains of about five hundred future chamois, worth each some twenty *scudi*—total, thirty thousand francs. So on the whole the compensation I offered is grotesquely inadequate!”

At certain times, the Galantuomo *could* calculate, which did not prevent his heir from being crippled for years by his endeavours to restore the equilibrium of the Royal budget, rudely disturbed during the preceding reign.

Although comparatively a young man still, being born in 1844, the King's hair and thick moustache (when was there a Prince of Savoy whose moustache was not thick?) is profusely streaked with gray; but his figure is youthful and alert. He devotes more time to the affairs of Government than his father used to. Conscientious and self-diffident by temperament,

he distrusts any spontaneous inspiration ; but when he is once convinced of the advisability and practicability of a scheme, he carries it out with unflagging perseverance to its absolute completion.

His stables and studs at Monza are unrivalled in any Royal establishment of Europe ; and the perfection brought to bear on all things pertaining to the administration of the Italian Court there reaches its apogee. The King owns horses from all lands and of all races, from the pink-nostrilled Silesian Trackheners to the coal-black steeds sent him by the Emperor of Morocco ; but his favourite charger remains the well-known and almost faultless "Mufflone."

The Prince of Naples looks well on horseback, and more to his advantage than on foot, owing to his diminutive stature. When he arrived at Berlin in March, 1888, for Kaiser Wilhelm's funeral, he was met at the station by the chief and members of the Embassy, and by the dignitaries of the German Court attached to his person during his stay. The Ambassador had brought a superb wreath of violets, bound with broad ribbons of the Italian colours, to be deposited by the Prince on the

dead Emperor's coffin. When he was asked whether he would repair at once to the Cathedral or go first to the quarters prepared for him, he shot a quick glance at Colonel Osio, and apparently understanding the meaning conveyed, expressed his intention of first doing homage at the *Dom*. This decision seemed to gratify the German escort, who took their places at his side, and with him left the platform. As fate would have it, two of the tallest of the gigantic generals of the Prussian army had been deputed to attend him, and as he walked out of the station between them he looked even more slender and delicate, but withal possessed of such sweet simplicity of manner and grave composure in this his first representative mission, that he won the warm regard of his colossal companions.

A striking contrast to the young heir of Italy, in stature, appearance, and expression, was presented by the Archduke Rudolph, the future Emperor of Austria, at that melancholy pageant. He had already made his mark in the world, and, although not yet thirty, had achieved the reputation of being a serious, matured man, one who has travelled far, read

much, studied a great deal, and written several learned and scientific books. Without seeking the noisy popularity so dear to some heirs apparent, he had not been able to withdraw himself completely from the appreciative judgment of the world.

The Archduke is not faultlessly handsome; his features are irregular and almost gloomy in repose, but when he becomes animated in some discussion with his intimates on subjects that interest him, his whole countenance lights up with bright intelligence, and no one would venture to call him plain. His nature is made up of apparently irreconcilable contrasts, and for that very reason is not easily understood and sometimes misjudged. He has the blind instincts of mediæval chivalry, with the clear-sighted liberality of the nineteenth-century *savant*. He owes these complex characteristics to the reflex of his early education. Two men were placed at his side; one, General de Gondrecourt, an inflexible soldier, taught him the religion of the past and the respect of old traditions; the other, Pastor Brehm, whose tendencies were almost revolutionary, fostered in his disciple independence of thought and opinion. Out of

this double nurture grew a strong moral individuality, and equally strong outward subservience to form and established rules. The attitude of the Archduke at times even awes the Emperor, and yet he never approaches his father without kissing his hand.

In April, 1887, he was sent by Francis Joseph on a lengthened tour through the provinces of the empire, with the explicit desire that his progress should have a purely military character, not a political one; and to that effect intimation was forwarded to the different cities at which the Prince was to halt, to dispense with all civil or public demonstrations in his honour. Nevertheless, the loyal enthusiasm elicited by the Archduke, suppressed in one quarter found vent in another, and expressed itself on one occasion in an embarrassing manner. At a mess banquet, given to him by the officers of a hussar regiment, a young lieutenant suddenly rose and proposed the following toast:

“Gentlemen, let us drink in a bumper of good Rhine wine to the health of our Crown Prince, whom God Almighty may make one day Emperor of Germany!”

The disastrous effect of this audacious

speech was hushed up, the officer put under arrest, the head of the corps severely reprimanded, and great discontent felt in high quarters; but no after-measures, however prudential or rigid, could alter the case that in presence of the Crown Prince the secret hopes of the army had for once found an unchecked expression.

The Archduke is not only a scientific but a literary man. He has contributed several times to military publications, and consigned the impressions of his travels in two works, called respectively "The Danube" and "The East." He started the ethnological publication of "Austria-Hungary in Pen and Pencil," which has reached its seventy-eighth sheet, assisted by journalistic *collaborateurs*. The Archduchess Stephanie, his wife, made a sketch for the first number and received a hundred florins in payment, which she at once placed in her little daughter's saving-box.

Prince Rudolph entered fervently upon the study of natural history and ornithology. In one of his visits to London, some ten years ago, he showed great interest in all the public collections of birds, and asked to be shown those made by

private collectors. Alone in a hansom cab he drove to the suburban residence of Mr. E. Harting, the distinguished Fellow of the Zoological Society—now Secretary to the Linnæan Society—and spent some hours in examining the many rare specimens he possesses, expressing himself much pleased with all the information his host was able to give him respecting hawks and hawking, an art which Mr. Harting has tried to resuscitate in England.

Archduke Rudolph has neither pride nor arrogance, he is earnest, convinced, and unaffected. He likes to surround himself with journalists and professors, against whom he is quite able to hold his own on general and scientific topics. If his predilection for these associates were questioned, he would probably answer in the same words used by his ancestor, Joseph II., when his old counsellor advised him to seek the society of none but his peers. "If I persisted in seeing only my equals," he said, "I should have to live in the family vault of the Hapsburgs."

The Crown Prince resembles this same Joseph II. in disposition; like him he is imperious and liberal, and it would almost seem

as if he had taken him for a model. He is at once self-contained and effusive ; little incidents have now and then brought into relief both these peculiarities. A stranger saw him at a Court concert in Vienna, quietly conversing with a Frenchman on Paris and Parisian matters, and from his familiar *bonhomie* might have taken him for some insignificant mediatised Serene Highness ; but the following day, at the opening of the Polish ball, he promptly recognised the future emperor of a large nation in the young man who stood so proudly under the raised dais. It was in 1887 ; Prince C——, an illustrious Polish noble, was standing before the Archduke, bowing low repeatedly without obtaining a look or sign of acknowledgment ; his embarrassment was becoming painfully apparent, when suddenly the eyes of the Imperial Highness happening to fall upon the Pole, he stretched out his hand and cordially shook the Prince's. His indifferent coldness at first was genuine and instinctive ; his cordiality the outcome of disciplined reflection.

He is too sincere to dissemble, and only a strong effort of will enables him to conceal his impressions ; even then not always successfully.

He showed it only too clearly when he represented Austria on the fateful 16th of March in Berlin. There never had been any love lost between the heir of the Austrian Empire and the young man of nearly exactly his own age, who on that day was yet one step removed from his inheritance. There never will be sincere amity between the one whose father has just celebrated the fortieth year of his reign, and the Emperor William II., who has been carried prematurely to the throne by two catastrophes. The latter is flushed with the intoxication of brilliant triumphs achieved, of victories won, of an empire founded on glorious battle-fields within a recent past. The former, although he can look back upon centuries of existence, cannot forget that the honour and glory of his country's annals has been obscured by later reverses, and that defeat and humiliation have been meted out to his house by the predecessor of his rival.

Those memories rankled in his mind as he stood at the foot of the old Emperor's catafalque ; amidst a host of foreign kings and princes wearing German uniforms, the Archduke alone stood in the white regimentals of an Austrian

general, his breast blazing with national orders. As the Imperial coffin was carried out of the church he bent low before the dead, but in so doing he caught the glance of the chief mourner, Prince Wilhelm, and immediately abandoning his deferential attitude he straightened himself to his full height, and mechanically seeking with his hand the hilt of his long cavalry sabre, stepped proudly forward. Rudolph of Hapsburg, advancing to the foremost ranks of the *cortège*, found himself nearly on a level with William of Hohenzollern, whose left arm was hidden by the loose sleeve of his dolman.

The young German Emperor has inherited from his English mother, if nothing else, her freethinking views, her impatience of narrow religious and doctrinal rules; while the Austrian Archduke, like the Bavarian Empress Elizabeth, is openly, fearlessly, staunchly, a good Roman Catholic, and never attempts to conceal the fact. At a ball given on Shrove Tuesday at the Palace of Berlin he danced with great apparent enjoyment till midnight, but when the clock struck the dawn of Ash Wednesday he quietly withdrew into the deep embrasure of a window, and remained a

passive spectator of the revels. One day, riding in the streets of Pesth, he met a funeral; he stopped, looked proudly at his escort, and with a slightly theatrical movement forced his horse to drop on its knees, saluted the hearse, made the sign of the cross, then raising the animal and pursuing his way, he said aloud :

“Death without God is only the beginning of corruption !”

Pastor Brehm has never succeeded, perhaps because he never attempted to do so, in checking the religious belief of his disciple in the faith of his ancestors, or in inducing him to free himself from its outward observances.

The Prince of Wales has said of him that he was “very German;” he might have added “very anti-Prussian,” for if the Emperor of Austria has become in some degree reconciled by time to his reverses, and more resignedly accepts the pain of his defeat, Prince Rudolph harbours a lasting resentment against the cause of his country’s humiliation; and all the contemporary generation, composed of the ardent youth of Austria and the still more enthusiastic youth of Hungary, share his rancour and burn

with a secret thirst for retaliation. As children, they looked with admiring fondness on the boy of ten, clad in the uniform of a colonel of infantry, playing at ball with a colonel of sixty on the terraces of Schönbrunn, and cheered him lustily; as men, their cheers were louder when he took his long military ride through his future dominions, and they look upon him as the custodian of their national honour.

His two most trusted friends are Arthur Potoki, the demigod of the Cracovians, and Count Johann Willszech, an intelligent and art-loving Hungarian; he never wearies of their society and conversation, and in truth he could not have selected more worthy subjects as the recipients of his friendship.

Prince Rudolph has a deeply-rooted aversion for the police and an equally profound partiality for the army. Not very long ago he was present at a private reception where General Boulanger was spoken of in the most unflattering terms; the Archduke was the only person who took his defence.

“So your Imperial Highness is *Boulangiste*,” observed the hostess with imperceptible irony.

"No, madame," he answered gravely, "but soldiers of all nations are brothers, and I shall never hear a general vilified and condemned on a police report without standing up for that general."

In 1881 he married the Princess Stephanie, eldest daughter of the King of the Belgians ; the wedding was delayed long after the announcement was made publicly known, and the Prince was even sent on foreign travel. When the union at last took place it did not seem to bring the young couple all the anticipated happiness, and at various times distressing rumours have been current of an impending divorce. However, the causes of misintelligence have been grossly exaggerated, and the tactful efforts of sage friends, the beneficial influence of the Emperor and Empress, the wise representations of the Queen of the Belgians, have averted so undesirable a consummation. The Crown Prince has no son—if one was granted to his prayers there would need no alien interference to make him completely content in his domestic relations.

The ink had not dried on this page when the

telegraph wires flashed the startling news that the Crown Prince of Austria had been found dead in his bed in his hunting-box of Meyerling, near Vienna, at seven o'clock on the morning of the 30th of January. Ten months after the events in which he played the part recorded above he was laid low in his turn. Full of the promise of life, a strong, valiant, and honourable gentleman, in the prime of his thirtieth year; the only son of a father cruelly tried as a patriot and a sovereign, the centre of a nation's hopes and aspirations, he died alone, in the shadows of the night, unattended, unwatched, and without warning, save a vague melancholy foreboding of evil to come, having near him neither mother, child, nor wife to hear his last words, receive his last breath, and close his eyes!

Surely the irony of fate is terrible! While the past of a man is unfolded, his future discussed, his power for good or evil commented upon, his actions chronicled, that man is lying lifeless on the couch which he sought a few hours ago full of strength and energy, with a careless "good-night" to his companions. What thoughts were

with him in those last moments? Did he ponder over opportunities neglected, regret possibilities that were taken from him, deplore estrangements that he had perchance hoped to cancel, before he committed the fatal act to which such various interpretations have been given, which it was impossible to conceal, which added shame to the uncontrollable grief of the mourners, and which was yet powerless to detract from the love a whole nation bore him?

In the consternation caused by this catastrophe, the thought of the stricken father persistently obtrudes itself. One fancies him battling alone with his sorrow, with no other son to lean upon, no heir to help him bear his burden, and unable to take comfort from the universal sympathy which associates Austria—nay, the whole world with his pain, and which he dare not accept openly in the cruel circumstances of his bereavement.

The Emperor will suffer more than most men, for in him the paternal instinct is strongly developed under a reserved, at times even cold exterior. He feels deeply, and he has of late years concentrated on his three children the affections which were once wholly those of

the beautiful Empress Elizabeth. Disappointed, maybe, or alienated in that quarter, he has given the place in his heart where the mother stood enthroned, to her daughters. The youngest, Valerie, a girl of twenty, about to become a bride, is the constant companion of the Empress, and resembles her in some respects. She has her figure and carriage, the same matchless wealth of hair, but not her beauty. The eldest, Archduchess Gisèle, is her father's favourite, and since she has been removed to Munich by her marriage with Prince Leopold of Bavaria in 1873, Francis Joseph snatches every year a brief holiday to spend a few days with her. These interviews are the subject of a long preliminary correspondence; in a constant exchange of detailed and tender letters, mingled with numerous expressions of love, the probable date and hour of the Emperor's arrival is discussed, and fears are entertained lest some unforeseen European complication should delay his departure. As soon as the political horizon is sufficiently clear, Francis Joseph orders a special train and speeds to the Bavarian capital, taking with him only one aide-de-camp and one valet.

Even at Vienna and Schönbrunn he dislikes

etiquette as much as the Empress, but for different reasons; *she* rebels against it because it interferes with her amusements, *he* because it raises barriers between him and his affections; he seizes every opportunity of freeing himself from the trammels of representation, to which he submits merely from a sense of duty, and as soon as the train steams out of the Vienna station he forgets that he is a monarch, and remembers only that he is a father. When he arrives at the railway platform in Munich, two people step into the carriage—his daughter and her husband. After the first warm greetings they carry him off to their landau and drive to the palace. As soon as the carriage is in sight the sentinels on guard at the palace signal it, and the whole household assembles in the vestibule, the group being headed by the two young Princesses, Elizabeth and Augusta, their brothers George and Conrad, with their governesses. When their Imperial grandfather alights they rush into his arms with fond fearlessness, barely permitting him to acknowledge with his unfailing courtesy, the respectful salutations of the other persons present. This

is his last concession to ceremony, and henceforth, for the remainder of his stay, he gives himself up entirely to the enjoyment of his children's company and familiar intercourse with two or three valued friends, never omitting, however, to call each time upon his aged father-in-law, Duke Maximilian. Perhaps once or twice during his stay a banquet is given, but he much prefers the ordinary family dinner, at which the children have always assisted, the youngest boy sitting between his governess and his mother's lady-in-waiting. The conversation at meals is invariably carried on in French, to conform with a rule established by Prince Leopold. After dinner Francis Joseph pays a short visit to the nurseries before joining his host in the smoking-room, a quaint apartment, hung with antlers and other spoils of the chase, brought by the Prince from his shooting expeditions in the mountains of Styria and Tyrol. In the place of honour stands a large bird, commonly called "Styrian Grouse," shot by the Emperor himself one day when he accompanied his son-in-law, and which he had sent immediately to the Archduchess Gisèle.

On Sunday, at half-past nine, Francis Joseph attends mass at the palace chapel, surrounded by the members of his family, big and small. He remains standing during the whole service, wearing civilian clothes ; but Prince Leopold is in the full uniform of a Bavarian general. Although a tall and handsome man, he appears dwarfed by the side of his father-in-law's commanding stature. After mass the Emperor has fallen into the habit, weather permitting, of walking out alone ; he leaves the city, and generally wends his way towards the hamlet of Schwaberg. It amuses him to enter into conversation with the peasants and Sunday loafers, questioning them about their occupations and means of livelihood, and finding ready response to the interest evinced by "the kind, chatty, easy stranger." They do not suspect his identity. One day, a very old man, who had stood listening to his talk with a group of labourers, followed him as he retraced his steps to Munich, and, gradually edging up alongside of him, informed him that he too was going up to the city in quest of work, as he had no food to give his wife and children. The Emperor

handed him a gold twenty-mark piece, the only coin he had about him ; and his companion, fascinated by this liberality, continued to escort him till together they arrived before the palace. Seeing the guard present arms, the old peasant looked round to find out for whom the honour was intended, and during that interval the Emperor slipped in and disappeared. When the old man was told afterwards by a foot-passenger the rank of the quiet-looking gentleman who had listened so patiently to him, he was so overcome with emotion that he collapsed on the side-walk, and for some time could not be persuaded to return home.

By numberless little incidents of this kind Francis Joseph has endeared himself to his people. Geniality is the essence of his disposition, notwithstanding an occasional outward reserve of manner. He has neither pride of position nor arrogance of rank ; he has given the world the spectacle of a sovereign who on the day of his jubilee had to stem the enthusiasm of the nation, to withdraw himself from their ovations, and silence their cheers ; who accepted from his subjects neither costly gifts

nor large donations, but asked only for their prayers; and who found his aristocracy willing to forego the pleasure of presenting him with a testimonial of their regard, and obey his wishes by distributing among the poor of his realm the sums that would have been so lavishly squandered to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of a paternal and judicious reign. And yet it is to the monarch spending the 2nd of December in the seclusion of Miramar, pondering over the welfare of the populations entrusted to his care, to the gentle ruler secure in the belief that his son would nobly continue his work, that came a few weeks later the irreparable loss of to-day.

The occasion of the jubilee of Francis Joseph suggested to a Hungarian writer, M. Bertha, the publication of a biography of his sovereign, containing facts and documents which will prove of great historical value, and throw an impartial light on contemporary events in Austria. The author little dreamt that for the second time in less than fifty years the crown would pass from the direct eventual succession to a collateral heir. The present ruler received it from his uncle, and

will now transmit it to his brother, and by his renunciation it falls to his nephew.

His predecessor, Ferdinand, surnamed the *Débonnaire*, either from weakness or incapacity had almost entirely yielded the reins of government to the able hands of M. de Metternich; and if his reign was prosperous, it was due not so much to the initiative of the ruler as to the general reaction of Europe against the turmoil and convulsions of the earlier part of the century. After so many years of strife, war and bloodshed, a natural instinct swayed humanity, which impelled it to efface the traces of disaster and ruin with an era of peace. A fresh impulse was given to commerce, art, literature and science in all countries, and the age of railway communication was successfully inaugurated. Nevertheless, in 1847, the intellectual debility of Ferdinand had so far increased that the advisability of an early abdication was seriously mooted by his counsellors and his family; the startling events of the following year, by making his withdrawal from public affairs all the more imperative, brought matters to a crisis. He was

childless, and his immediate successor was, in the natural sequence of events, his brother Francis Charles ; but the Archduke was vacillating of purpose, and so completely under the influence of his wife, the imperious and ambitious Sophia of Bavaria, that he was set aside, and the choice of the State fell upon his eldest son, Francis Joseph, then a youth of eighteen.

Rarely had so high a fortune fallen on one more worthy. Tall, slight, handsome, the Prince had grown up under the vigilant eye of his grandfather, Napoleon I.'s father-in-law, and had received an educational training to which his gifted nature fully responded. He had mastered not only the modern and classical languages, but spoke fluently the wild dialects of his polyglot Fatherland ; he had studied Roman, civil, and canon law, chemistry, and engineering ; experienced officers had taught him strategy and the art of taking plans ; he had a natural taste for drawing, and the sketches he made during an early journey to Italy, which are still extant, show considerable talent. The young Archduke was neither a prig nor a book-worm, although an earnest

student; he was an adept at every sport and exercise, and won the first prize at a shooting competition with the best marksmen of Tyrol, who elected him a member of their guild. He was a bright, joyous lad, full of life and spirits, but when he heard himself for the first time addressed as "Majesty" he became grave, and said sadly :

"Farewell now to my youth!"

The ceremony by which the crown was conferred on him was solemn and imposing. It took place on December 2nd, 1848, in the ancient archiepiscopal palace of Olmutz, half fortress, half prelate's residence, a gloomy and sombre pile, in the presence of the assembled members of the Imperial family, the Ministers of State, the Court, and the representatives of the nobility, army, and clergy. The Prince of Schwartzenberg read aloud the act of abdication of Ferdinand, the act of renunciation of Francis Charles, and the proclamation of the majority of Francis Joseph, who, advancing towards his uncle, knelt at his feet so overcome with emotion that he could not utter a word. The dispossessed monarch gave the young Prince

his benediction, raised him, and embracing him, said aloud :

“God bless you ! If you deserve it He will stand by you. Do not be unhappy about me. What has been done was of my own free will !”

Francis Joseph *has* deserved the Almighty’s protection !

At that time Hungary was seriously disaffected, and showing unmistakable signs of an imminent rebellion, which would have had its excuse in the vexatious laws and irritating restrictions under which it laboured. Even the Magyars had to submit to them. The prohibition against the carrying of weapons was so rigorously enforced by the police, that the chiefs were not permitted to have steel blades to the swords that formed an integral part of their national costume ; they were only authorised to carry belt and scabbard if the latter contained nothing more warlike than a wooden lath ; and with this pitiful makeshift the Hungarian nobles had to salute their master ! The young Emperor was fully aware of the hostile attitude of the Hungarians, but nevertheless his first act after his accession to the throne was to visit their

country. He addressed them in their own tongue, recalled their glorious past, granted amnesties, suspended courts-martial, rescinded objectionable statutes, and by his frank and fearless demeanour converted the malcontents, leaving behind him, instead of rebels, loyal subjects.

In the summer of 1853, his engagement to the Princess Elizabeth of Bavaria was made public. (Her two sisters later on married the King of Naples and the Duc d'Alençon.) She was sixteen; he was twenty-three. Their betrothal was solemnised at Ischl, and the beauty of the young couple called forth transports of admiration. It was emphatically a love-match; and, as if no happy omen could be wanting to gild the future of the Imperial pair, on that very day the old historical crown of St. Stephen was discovered at Orsova, where it had been concealed by the last defenders of Hungarian independence after their final defeat. Since the year 1000 the Magyars had always connected this crown with the destinies of their country.

As soon as the young Empress appeared in Vienna she became the object of universal

worship; in the flush of his triumph at having won so fair a prize, her consort scattered his liberalities far and wide; he granted a free pardon to all political offenders, and gave five hundred thousand florins to the poor of the city; then, in order to show his lovely bride to all the populations of his empire, he took her with him to the Danubian provinces, thence to Venice and Milan, where the people, smarting under Austrian rule, forgot their wrongs as they gazed on her fair face and unanimously sang her praises; she went to Hungary, where she completed the subjugation of the inhabitants the day that she appeared on the balcony of the palace of Buda-Pesth and smiled her acknowledgment to the cheering crowds below.

Since then the conjugal felicity of the Imperial couple has known some shadows, and if the memory of that triumphant honeymoon still lingers in their hearts, it has not always been vivid enough to smooth down certain asperities and to resist certain disillusion. The sudden and violent likings of the Empress for riding, hunting, athletics, and pedestrian exercise have been viewed sorrowfully by Francis.

Joseph; they seemed to him incompatible with the dignity of the woman and the sovereign. However, he confined himself to silent disapproval and an affectation of ignorance, when a circus was established in the riding-school of her palace, in which the Empress rode bare-backed steeds or jumped through paper hoops on a broad saddle; he tried not to see how his proud Elizabeth, beautiful still, offended the ladies of her nobility by neglecting them, while she ostentatiously shook hands at a railway station with a girl who was a well-known circus rider of Vienna; but he would never allow those errors which he deplored to cause an irreparable breach in his home, trusting to her better sense to do herself justice at last. In that respect he has not been mistaken; sobered by advancing years, by ill-health, perhaps by her husband's unfailing leniency, the Empress has returned to more orthodox ways; and if she still takes exercise than is usual with reigning ladies, her way of doing it is neither unfeminine now nor remarkable. At the time when the Emperor found it most difficult to close his eyes to the deceptions of his home life, he sought solace

in distant travel. He visited Athens and Constantinople, and went to Jerusalem, where since 1836 no ruler of the House of Hapsburg had entered. As he came within sight of the Holy City he dismounted, and, following an old tradition, kissed the ground. When he had crossed the gates, he proceeded on foot with his escort to the Holy Sepulchre, and knelt in prayer. On through Cairo and the Pyramids, he returned to Vienna by Corfu and Trieste. He had long before that been to Paris, during the Exhibition of 1867, when he pronounced at the Hôtel de Ville the liberal and pacific speech which seemed a guerdon of amity between Austria and France.

Moderate in politics, catholic in his views, deeply attached to the institutions of his country, enlightened in his mode of government, habitually grave and self-contained, Francis Joseph has had occasionally a remarkable intuition of the future. It was one of those prophetic inspirations which caused him to repeatedly assert his conviction that the Comte de Chambord would never reign in France; while feeling the greatest regard for the character of the last of the Bourbons, he was

certain that a monarchical restoration would at no time be effected in his person.

One fatal word has long been written in indelible letters on the heart of Francis Joseph—it had burned out the scars left by the severing of his fair Italian provinces, and remained to him a long-enduring pain. That word is *Sadowa*, but now even that ineffaceable sorrow pales before the greater grief of losing his only son, and the humiliation of the sovereign counts but little weighed against the bereavement of the father.

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